Football Premiership: Chelsea 5 Middlesbrough 0

Chelsea hit a rich seam

David Lacey

AT THE moment Chelsea could pass for prospective champions. Certainly they are passing the ball as well as Newcastle United. On Sunday Glenn Hoddle's team overwhelmed a Middlesbrough side for whom defending has become a forgotten art. A 5-0 victory extended Chelsea's present run in the league to 12 matches with one defeat and lifted them to eighth place.

Middlesbrough, by contrast, have now lost seven league games out of eight. On December 10 they lay fourth. Another month like this and fears of relegation will be more than an occasional shudder.

The pattern of the game was assured once Lee's strong, sweeping passes from the back had begun to open up the flanks, sometimes for Phelan on the left but more significantly for Petrescu on the right. Middlesbrough found no answer to the timing of either the Romanian's passes or his forward runs.

The rest belonged to Gullit, who will always torture demoralised opposition with neither the will nor the wit to deny him space, and to Peacock, who scored his first hat-trick in Premiership football.

A crop of injuries, the latest keeping Juninho out of the side, have contributed to Middlesbrough's decline. Yet Chelsea were without not only Hughes and Wise but Duberry, their fast-maturing young centre-back, who was also suspended.

In attack Middlesbrough were much as they had been before Juninho's arrival, with Barmby and Hignett supporting Fjortoft. This part of their game occasionally worked well, with Fjortoft drawing some sharp saves from Hitchcock, the best shortly before half-time when the Chelsea keeper turned a shot over the bar. But by the time Wilkinson, who had replaced Fjortoft, hit a post in the 89th minute Middlesbrough's day was done.

The fact that Chelsea's first goal a minute before the half-hour should not have been allowed was scant consolation for Robson and his players. Yet Gullit was plainly offside as the defence pushed out after Fjortoft had cleared Lee's corner. Peacock's mishit volley bounced past the unsighted goalkeeper, the goal stood, and was soon followed by two more.

After 31 minutes Spencer scurried through a gap to gather Petrescu's through-pass and increase Chelsea's lead. In the 38th minute Gullit found the busy Spencer in space on the right and surged through for the return before setting up a second goal for Peacock. Seven minutes into the second half a wonderful pass from Gullit once more exposed the Middlesbrough defence to Petrescu. Peacock's third, followed two minutes later.

Results and leading positions

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: Arsenal 1, Coventry 1; Aston Villa 3, Leeds 0; Blackburn 4, Bolton 1; Chelsea 5, Middlesbrough 0; Liverpool 0, Tottenham 0; Man City 2, QPR 0; Newcastle 2, Sheff Wed 0; Southampton 2, Everton 2; West Ham 1, Nottm Forest 0, Wimbledon 2, Man Utd 4. **Leading positions:** 1, Newcastle (played 24, points 57); 2, Man Utd (25-48); 3, Liverpool (25-46).

ENDSLEIGH LEAGUE: First Division: Barnsley 2, Watford 1; Charlton 0, Crystal Palace 0; Grimsby 1, Derby 1; Huddersfield 1, Tranmere 0; Ipswich 2, WBA 1; Leicester 1, Luton 1; Norwich 1, Birmingham 1; Reading 0, Portsmouth 1; Sheffield Utd 2, Oldham 1; Southend 2, Millwall 0; Wolves 3, Sunderland 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Derby (28-51); 2, Charlton (27-46); 3, Huddersfield (29-45).

Second Division: Blackpool 1, Hull City 1; Bournemouth 2, Wycombe 3; Brentford 1, Burnley 0; Brighton 2, Wrexham 2; Bristol R 2, Walsall 0; Chesterfield 3, Swansea 2; Notts Co 1, Peterborough 0, Rotherham 1, Oxford 0; Shrewsbury 1, Bradford 1; Swindon 2, Carlisle 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Swindon (26-53); 2, Crewe (25-47); 3, Notts County (24-46).

Third Division: Barnet 1, Scunthorpe 0; Cambridge Utd 0, Gillingham 0; Cardiff 3, Doncaster 2; Darlington 2, Leyton Orient 0; Hartlepool Utd 1, Rochdale 1; Lincoln City 0, Colchester 0; Mansfield 0, Northampton 0; Plymouth 4, Chester 2; Scarborough 0, Exeter 0; Torquay 2, Fulham 1; Wigan 0, Preston 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Gillingham (27-53); 2, Preston (27-51); 3, Chester (27-44).

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Premier Division: Celtic 2, Hibernian 1; Falkirk 4, Kilmarnock 2, Hearts 2, Raith 0, Partick 1, Rangers 2. **Leading positions:** 1, Rangers (25-59); 2, Celtic (25-58); 3, Hearts (25-37).

First Division: Dundee Utd 1, St Johnstone 3, St Mirren 5, Dumbarton 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Dundee Utd (25-46); 2, Greenock Morton (23-45); 3, Dunfermline (21-41).

Second Division: Ayr 1, Stenhousemuir 1; East Fife 1, Clyde 1; Montrose 1, Berwick Rangers 2; Stirling Albion 4, Queen of South 1; Stranraer 1, Forfar 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Stirling Albion (23-49); 2, East Fife (23-47); 3, Berwick Rangers (23-38).

Third Division: Alloa 0, Ross County 4; Arbroath 1, Queen's Pk 1; Livingston 0, Brechin 1; Cowdenbeath 2, Caledonian Thistle 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Brechin (23-42); 2, Arbroath (23-38); 3, Caledonian Thistle (22-37).

Cryptic crossword by Araucaria

Across

1 Where miners are company for a king and one higher (4-4)
5, 24 Protest at wearing fewer clothes as a warning (6-6)
9 A line in verse (English) depicting the viburnum (4-4)
10 Row tied in a bow? (6)
12 A mathematical triumvirate? (4,2,5)
15 Sir Thomas's manners? (5)
17 Underlying explanation could be a score out (4,5)
18 Arab chief accepts £3 to gain Egyptian leader's ear (5-4)
19 Game going between bars (5)
20 Novel sails for sailor, not one to be novel (5,6)
24 See 5
25 The best item is tainted by an eruption (4,4)
26 Having a go at being vexatious (6)
27 Unorthodox set gives relics (8)

Down

1 Almost arrive to pledge mutual agreement? (10)
2 It any circumstances tidiness is a lot to ask (1,4,5)
3 Stout fellow giving a soft answer (5)
4 Town seat of patronising earl (12)
6 Goat gets prize flower (9)
7 It's wrong to be uplifted (4)
8 Goat destroyed garment (4)
11 Possible clue to piers in 4 (7,5)
13 Sow attachment (audibly, you see) into skin for piano in one performance (7-3)
14 Play about stars and selves, from French: "The Strawberry Tree"'s about right (4,6)
16 Helper in the cellar (4-5)
21 A female model is less than a dish (5)
22 Some ground for intrigue (4)
23 Notice particularly over your head (4)

Last week's solution

African Nations' Cup final: South Africa 2 Tunisia 0

Cup runneth over . . . supporters celebrate South Africa's victory over Tunisia

PHOTOGRAPH: MATTHEW ASHTON

Nelson's golden goal

John Perlman in Johannesburg

NELSON MANDELA would never say as much but South Africa's victory last Saturday surely gave him more pleasure than any of the other sporting triumphs that he has presided over and helped to inspire.

Last year black South Africans reached joyously across a decades-old divide to embrace the World Cup-winning Springboks and the cricketers won friends in beating England. But this triumph in the sport of the masses has stirred a much deeper pride.

"This is my best New Year's present," Mandela said after South Africa's convincing victory in front of 90,000 people packed into the FNB Stadium here. "I never knew our boys could perform this well."

At the start of the tournament most fans likewise did not know what the team were capable of. And when the players look over the videotape of the 3-0 semi-final win over Ghana many will pinch themselves and say: "Was that really us?"

It was only in the second half of the final that South Africa began to approach that level of intensity against a Tunisia side not strong enough to dominate the match but wily enough to make winning difficult. Even so, after a series of chances went begging, it needed a man with a sense that this was his day to finish Tunisia off.

"My sister-in-law called me this morning and prayed to me over the phone," said the Wolves striker Mark Williams, who came in off the bench with less than half an hour left. "Then I knew I would score today."

Score Williams did, not once but twice in two minutes — the first a header from close range, the second a sweetly struck shot after he was sent away on the counter-attack.

While the stadium shook with stomping and singing, the South African defenders saw off a last frantic onslaught that produced seven consecutive corners.

Cricket

World Cup close to chaos

David Hopps

WEST INDIES joined forces with Australia this week in imploring the World Cup organisers to reschedule their group match outside Sri Lanka in the wake of last week's terrorist bomb blast in Colombo.

Although West Indies did not quite follow Australia's lead by expressly refusing to play in Sri Lanka, the tone of their statement implied that refusal was inevitable if a switch was not granted.

Pilcom, the joint hosts' organising committee, have steadfastly dismissed Australia's request, its secretary Jagmohan Dalmiya insisting: "Pilcom has decided that the matches in Sri Lanka will be played as scheduled."

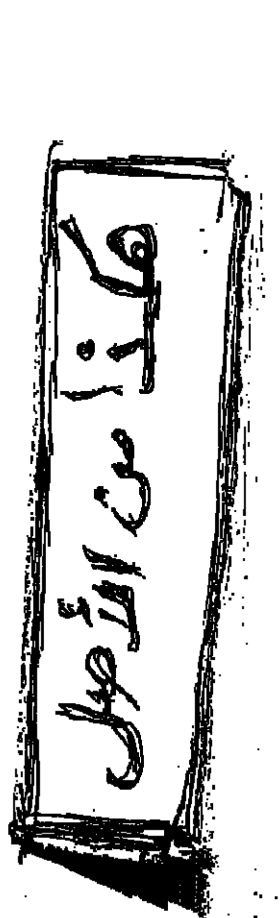
Australia's captain Mark Taylor, who spoke in Sydney on Monday of "a genuine concern of life-threatening injury", played down the risk of disqualification. Indeed that is highly improbable, Pilcom's response suggesting only mounting confusion. "There is nothing in the playing conditions about this," Dalmiya said. "It is totally unprecedented."

The West Indian announcement will have come as a jolt, but it would require formidable diplomatic efforts to persuade the organisers to change their stance before Sunday's opening ceremony in Calcutta.

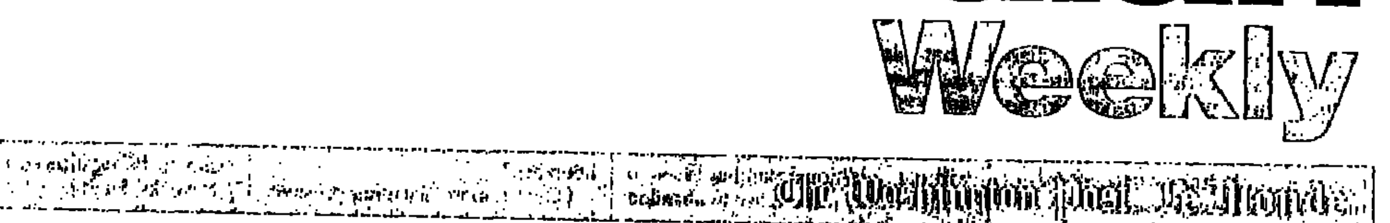
Whatever the merits of the argument, the willingness of cricket's authorities to invest decisions of such magnitude in a 12-strong organising committee, comprising representatives from Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka, rather than invest the ICC itself with overall powers, has again been exposed as folly.

Peter Short, president of the West Indies Board of Control, released a statement saying: "We are greatly appreciative of the security measures being taken by the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka.

"However . . . the board has reluctantly come to the conclusion that for the players' safety and peace of mind . . . it has requested Pilcom to reschedule the Sri Lanka v West Indies match outside Sri Lanka."



The **Guardian** Weekly



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Fragile hopes spring from bomb rubble

Michael White, David Sharrock and Patrick Wintour

FRAGILE hopes of rescuing the Northern Ireland peace process emerged this week from the rubble of the IRA's bomb in London's Docklands as the British and Irish governments groped towards a compromise formula which could still lead to early election and all-party talks — which could include Sinn Fein representatives.

A conciliatory John Major won the virtually unanimous support of a sombre House of Commons on Monday for his renewed commitment to a constitutional settlement, which he coupled with a challenge to Sinn Fein to denounce political violence.

But senior Dublin ministers enthusiastically seized on his simultaneous hint of fresh flexibility in the wake of their quarrel over the Mitchell Commission report. The Irish prime [illegible] and his deputy, Dick Spring, both welcomed Mr Major's "clear and direct" link between elections and the elusive all-party negotiations.

There were strong pointers from both sides that the leaders of the Ulster Unionists and John Hume's Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) had been privately signalling concessions last week designed to deliver an elected forum in Northern Ireland in May, and rapid, time-limited negotiations within it almost immediately afterwards.

"The bomb came at a time when we were very close to a formula that would have enabled us to move forward very quickly," Mr Bruton told Channel 4 News.

The Guardian has learned that British ministers are privately proposing a 90-strong forum, elected from 18 multi-member seats, from which small teams of negotiators would be drawn to negotiate in three parallel sessions.

A boy is held aloft at a rally in Belfast on Monday to support the peace process

PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL FAITH

To avoid the sterile slanging matches of the past, there would be no plenary sessions, only a final vote among the elected parties on the final agreement, some time this summer.

The source of slender optimism — reinforced by IRA indications from Dublin that the bomb was a one-off gesture of frustration — stems from British claims that the Unionists will not seek further delay by demanding "talks about talks" in an elected forum.

Despite the personal Commons initiative on Monday by the SDLP's Mr Hume — he urged an instant referendum on both sides of the Irish border to reject violence and endorse all-party talks — ministers and the Labour Opposition are convinced he is edging towards accepting elections. There was even talk of fitting in Dublin's own formula for breaking the deadlock — high-pressure, Bosnian-style "proximity talks" between the parties.

According to British ministerial sources, the new body would give the two governments effective vetoes over those discussions in which they are involved.

Britain's blueprint, which has been shown to Mr Hume and his Unionist counterpart, David Trimble, would be a test of the democratic mandate of the parties, but the size of negotiating delegations would not automatically reflect their electoral strength.

In his TV broadcast to the nation on Monday night, Mr Major insisted that "there is a new spirit in Northern Ireland, a spirit of peace", and said the IRA would "never bomb their way to the negotiating table". Echoing his Commons statement, he said the search for peace would continue. He said the principal purpose of his proposed elected body was to lead to negotiations within a short timescale.

"Sinn Fein and the IRA have a choice. Only when they commit themselves unequivocally to peace, and reinstate the ceasefire can they have a voice and a stake in Northern Ireland's future. But if they reject democratic principles and use violence, they can expect no sympathy and no quarter."

Comment, pages 12-13

Serb officers sent to war crimes court

Julian Borger

TWO Serb officers at the centre of a row which has threatened to unravel the Bosnian peace agreement arrived at the Scheveningen prison near The Hague on Monday after being flown out of Sarajevo, bound for the United Nations war crimes tribunal.

The dramatic extradition of General Djordje Djukic and Colonel Aleksa Krsmanovic, under heavy Nato guard, is almost certain to enrage the Bosnian Serb army, which severed contacts with the Nato-led Peace Implementation Force (I-For) after the officers' arrest late last month by Bosnian police. This is the first time the tribunal has extradited suspects from Bosnia. [illegible] Holbrooke, brokered an agreement between Bosnian and Serbian leaders over the weekend, establishing new rules for the pursuit of war criminals. Under the deal, the Bosnian government can arrest only war crimes suspects who appear on a list agreed in advance with The Hague tribunal.

Mr Holbrooke said: "We feel that the better understanding of what we would call 'rules of the road' is now in effect . . . and tensions that have risen in recent days should now begin to abate."

It was unclear whether the Serbian president, Slobodan Milosevic, had agreed to the new rules knowing that the two officers would be extradited. Even if he did, it is far from certain that he would be able to persuade the Bosnian Serb military commander, Ratko Mladic, to accept the extradition of his men.

Washington Post, page 15

The day the IRA brought its ceasefire to a bloody end



A bombed out office building on the Isle of Dogs in east London

Guardian Reporters

THE 17-month IRA ceasefire came to a bloody end at 7.01pm last Friday with a blast that rocked east London, killed two people and injured more than 100, caused up to £150 million in damage, and thrust Northern Ireland back into political ferment.

The bomb was believed to have been planted, at ground level, in an underground garage in a six-storey office block between South Quay station and an unfinished and empty building. Nearby buildings, where workers were still at their desks when the explosion blasted the Isle of Dogs, were protected from worse damage by the empty building.

The first hint that the ceasefire was about to end came when Scotland Yard received warnings from news agencies and Sky Television at 5.41pm that a coded statement had been received. Commander John Grieve, head of Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist branch, after visiting the scene, said: "Shortly before 6pm there were a series of warnings, coded, of a recognised nature, that brought the police and emergency services here. Whilst they were clearing the scene an explosion occurred at 7pm."

The message warned that the IRA had "with great reluctance" decided that the "complete cessation of violence" would end at 6pm.

Within an hour, the threat had been realised. Moments after 7pm the blast was heard throughout east and north-east London.

The bomb, between 500lb and one ton in weight, had been placed on a flat-back Ford Cargo lorry with false registration plates. It had been spotted by an officer, PC Roger de Graaf, injured in the blast, moments before the explosion.

Police over the weekend studied thousands of feet of closed circuit television film in an attempt to trace the vehicle's movements and see if there are any signs of the bombers leaving the lorry.

The two men killed in the explosion were named as Inan Ul-Haq Bashir, aged 29, of Streatham, south-west London, and John Jefferies, aged 31, of Bromley, Kent. Three seriously injured people remain in hospital.

The Prime Minister, John Major, immediately attacked the bombing as "an appalling outrage".

The Sinn Fein president, Gerry Adams, said he was saddened that the IRA ceasefire had ended, saying he regretted that "an unprecedented opportunity for peace has foundered on the refusal of the British government and Unionist leaders to enter into dialogue and substantive negotiations."

Austria	AS30	Malta	45c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 400	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,000	Switzerland	SF 3.30

A tutorial in basic student economics

IN LINE with the Guardian Weekly's view that a graduate tax is "the fairest way of repaying the benefits of university life" (Comment, February 11), shouldn't everyone in Britain who ever benefited now make repayments?

At one time, a university degree was thought to enable the holder to earn a higher income and therefore pay more tax, which in itself is a way of repaying society, in addition to the greater contribution a graduate is, in principle, able to make.

Isn't the underfunding of all services a consequence of Tory dogma: the divine right of the individual to keep as much of his own money as possible?
L R Armstrong,
Portsmouth

THE NEED for an alternative to the current university funding system is undeniable. However, the Conservative solution ignores the problems of those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. It also fails to mention the need for a repayment system which must necessarily be linked to income. These issues must be tackled if the economy is to retain talented people attracted to the "caring" professions which are notoriously badly paid, yet require education to degree level.
Arun Arora,

IT IS the equivalent of the first cuckoo of spring: vice-chancellors proposing top-up fees. Each year for about a decade, someone from their ranks has made such a proposal.

The Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals should decide what education system they aspire to. They can continue to squeeze more students into the system without extra resources or they can tell the Government that expansion without additional funding has to stop. Or they can choose to abandon the principle of free tuition that has been a cherished hallmark of British higher education for so many years.
Tim Walker,
London

THE MOST pressing question that is always asked when hopeful sixth-formers are being shown around university is not "How good is the course?", but "How much in debt will I be?" (followed by "Where's the Job Centre?"). With current proposals to abolish grants and make loans larger, the only people left taking degrees will be those lucky few whose loan will be paid off by mum and dad and people like myself who take every penny available and will think about the consequences later (I'm looking at around £6,000 by the time I finish).

It seems that the recent change in demography of students, from the élite few to the classless many, is only going to be a brief adventure for British institutions.
Ben Wheeler,
Frampton-on-Severn, Gloucestershire

... at least "one" year of postgraduate research have their tuition loans written off. This is because they will have generally carried out useful research work for little financial return.
Alexander Chablo,
Manchester

China's distance from democracy

CHINA'S extraordinary economic reforms naturally dispose observers (Beijing dodges democracy, January 28) to weigh the chances for parallel political reforms. Now that China is rich, will it liberalise?

Often, a more alarming prospect is overlooked: the likelihood that China will not only retain its imperial, authoritarian traditions, but that it will become powerful enough to "export" a measure of its neo-Confucian legacy to other countries, and eventually to the world at large.

The danger is real. Acting in cahoots with like-minded oligarchies in the region, the Chinese government has determined to challenge the moral foundations of the worldwide human rights system.

As one might expect, Beijing's alternative vision promotes state interests at the expense of individual liberties. China aims to entrench these regressive standards within its own borders, but also — thanks to its growing economic power — it will increasingly insist that foreign governments acquiesce in an emasculation of universal human rights standards.

Already the Chinese authorities have succeeded to a degree that may surprise even themselves. Statesmen from many countries, greedy for business contracts, have been elbowing each other aside in their eagerness to kowtow to Bei- ... And even the serious scholarly journals are full of solemn debate about an alleged "East Asian" standard of human rights.

One day, China may become strong enough to elicit some measure of formal international endorsement for its malevolent vision. When that happens, the world will be left with a compromised and debased human rights system. Then, it will be not only the long-suffering Chinese people, but every one of us who will be in danger.
Patrick Kavanagh,
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

A prayer for the refugee

FEW PEOPLE are even aware that an increasing number of asylum seekers in Britain will have no money to live on, and no right to work. No wonder, in view of the poor coverage given by the media to the savage new regulations Peter Lilley has proposed. Asylum seekers are the forgotten minority among the FTP, the forgotten 30 per cent of Britain.

Anyone claiming to be an asylum seeker, and who has received a first decision against their claim, cannot receive any benefit support while they make an appeal. Currently, a high proportion of such people are still awaiting a decision, and may well need to appeal if refused. They will not receive any benefit while waiting for an answer, and will not be allowed to work during the first six months in this country. The fact is that a higher proportion of cases are adjudged to be genuine on appeal than they are on the first hearing. Starving people cannot wait long enough for their case to be heard.

The Home Secretary is trying to ensure that all such decisions are made at the port of entry. A refugee arriving in the UK from a situation of persecution is immediately in strange surroundings, unknown procedures including a 75-question form to be filled in, possibly no knowledge of English, an unknown not necessarily friendly interpreter, a fear of authorities, and no legal representation. It is not surprising that many come in, therefore, and make their claim to be asylum seekers after a few weeks. Such people may well be genuine. To remove all means of support from them as they seek to get a full and fair hearing of their case is a deep betrayal of how any country ought to deal with people who are possibly genuine refugees.

We can only assume that no political party is willing to sustain a just system of dealing with refugees, because of the unpopularity of their cause at the polls.

If our vote catchers can afford to ignore the FTP, what hope for refugees within that 30 per cent. There have to be ways in which asylum seekers have their claims properly examined in a world full of refugees. We as Christians believe that this way does not even begin to measure against the standard of justice and mercy which a nation is required to uphold. What we do with refugees today, we will do to others who have no political redress tomorrow.
Rt Rev Peter Hall, Bishop of Woolwich, Rt Rev Wilfred Wood, Bishop of Croydon, Rt Rev Roger Sainsbury, Bishop of Barking, Ven Clive Young, Archdeacon of Hackney, Ven Douglas Bartles-Smith, Archdeacon of Southwark, Nor Holt, Diocese of Southwark,
London

Religion in schools

GOD FORBID that Muslim children in British schools should ever think, as Mohammed Amin of the Batley Muslim Association fears (Muslims boycott RE Classes, January 28) that their teachers may tell them the "truth" in the classroom.

Mr Amin is, of course, quite right when he concludes that a state-funded, all Muslim school would greatly facilitate the "forming" of young Asian and Middle Eastern childrens' religious beliefs. Perhaps we could negotiate a reciprocal agreement with important Muslim states like Iran and Saudi Arabia, by which they, in turn, would subsidise schools for Christmas on their territory. Similar steps could then be taken to satisfy the special requirements of Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, Taoists, Confucianists, Jews and Unitarianists.

In some countries, like France, they have solved this problem by not imparting any religious instruction at all in school, thus sparing tender minds this kind of juvenile indoctrination. In these countries it is held that it is no more the business of the state to instruct children in any one religion than it would be, for example, to instruct them in any one political ideology, and that the task of educational authority should be to develop intellectual faculties of their charges in such a way as to enable them to make an unbiased evaluation of each religion and accept or reject them according to their own unclouded criteria.
Stuart Dobbs,
Villajoyosa, Alicante, Spain

Briefly

THE WEEKLY of January 21 has a scathing description of US politics, "The best democracy that money can buy" (Martin Walker). There is also a leader piously deploring Mr Scargill's objecting to New Labour. In Australia, we have had a Labor government for 16 years, supported by powerful interests that considered it could weaken our egalitarian sentiments more successfully than an openly rightwing party. It seems the job has been well done, and the conservative parties will now be brought in for the final touches. Scargill's protest may be futile, but it's good to see that not everyone is content with economic rationalism.
J T Wearne,
Fremantle, Australia

WHAT a sad comment: "She [Hillary Clinton] was most disliked by college-educated white males, 'because she reminds them of their wives'." (Martin Walker, February 4) This seems to reflect much more on the supposedly "brightest and best" than on either Ms Clinton or the men's wives. It's sad that they still cannot bear the thought of their wives, or other women, being successful and in positions of power.
Diana Quirk,
Brooklyn, New York, USA

JONAS HUGHES weighs up the arguments in the language and mind debate (Learning English, January 28) but he does so by presenting the views of two people who represent only slightly different positions on the same side of the debate. Noam Chomsky and Steven Pinker both argue that the mind largely shapes language. But by arguing this way, they get reality almost exactly back-to-front. A contrary and more recent view, that the discourses we encounter in our lives largely shape the brain, is increasingly being accepted across a range of human science disciplines.
(Prof) David Corson,
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

WHEN Roger Milton (February 4) mentions not six, but seven Australian states, may we assume he is including New Zealand?
John Chapman,
Erskineville, NSW, Australia

PRINCE Charles is well-meaning but mistaken. Holding out hope for moral improvement through greater reliance on spirituality and religious faith is like increasing the dose of a failing medicine. Religion has had thousands of years to prove itself and has failed miserably. Much better to use the millennium to draw a line under the deep divisions arising from religious tribalism and to turn to humanism.
Tony Akkermans,
Leeds

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Sheikh Hasina, president of Bangladesh's opposition Awami League, comforts the widow of Abdul Alim, a leading party member, shot dead in clashes with political opponents in Dhaka last week PHOTO: PAVEL RAHMAN

Boycott makes farce of Bangladesh polls

Suzanne Goldenberg in Dhaka

BANGLADESH'S ruling Nationalist Party on Monday faced a new threat to its plans to hold a general election — already boycotted by all the main opposition parties — after civil servants said they would not staff polling booths.

Senior civil servants, representing more than 1,000 public employees, said they would defy an order to report as returning officers for Thursday's vote.

"There i... one bureaucrat. "Yesterday two of our colleagues were hurt in a bomb attack."

Although the opposition has vowed to disrupt the polls with a general strike, the bureaucratic boycott could be far more harmful. Radio and television presenters have said they will not report on the election.

Despite the protestations of the government, there are few signs that Bangladesh is entering the last days of an election campaign.

This campaign belongs to the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). All the main opposition parties are boycotting the vote because the prime minister, Begum Khaleda Zia, has refused to make way for a neutral administration that would guard against electoral fraud.

BNP candidates have already been elected unopposed in 49 constituencies. They do not appear to face much challenge in the others.

The Seven-Party Alliance, which is contesting ... 1991 — the only fair elections in independent Bangladesh. Other contenders, such as the Freedom Party and an Islamist party, scored just 0.27 per cent of the vote last time.

"These parties have been placed there only with the intention of showing that there is competition," said Khandakar Abdul Malik, who is defending his seat for the BNP in Sylhet.

At the weekend, Begum Khaleda Zia made her second campaign trip to two constituencies she is contesting north of Dhaka, leaving a trail of devastation in her wake, as protesters ran riot in an attempt to stop the meetings.

Political commentators fear that the escalating clashes surrounding election activity could force a cancellation of the polls and even — though they still see it as a remote possibility — a return to military rule.

But the BNP argues that it would ... to prevent people from voting.

"The violence and terror tactics are being applied only by three opposition parties," Badruddoza Chowdhury, the former deputy parliamentary leader, told a press conference.

He said that once the new government is elected it will try to seek a compromise with the BNP's main opponent, the Awami League, so that new elections can be held with full participation.

Russia signs 'giant' oil deal with Iraq

David Hearst in Moscow

RUSSIA has signed agreements for a number of "giant" projects to extract crude oil and help Iraq, which remains subject to United Nations economic sanctions, to rebuild its shattered power industry, Baghdad newspapers reported at the weekend.

The reports said the deal had been signed last week in Moscow after a series of meetings between the Iraqi first deputy industry and mines minister, Qahtan al-Anbaki, and Russia's fuel and energy minister, Yuri Shafranik. However, the agreement was signed only at the level of officials, rather than ministers.

While not denying that a "protocol" had been signed, Russian officials refused to elaborate on the deal's size. Some sources said it could be worth $10 billion to Russia.

The reported arrangement will put further pressure on UN negotiators who resumed talks this week in New York with Iraqi officials on the issue of lifting sanctions. The implementation of Security Council Resolution 986 would allow Baghdad to sell oil worth $2 billion over six months to pay for urgently needed food and medical supplies.

Russia and the US disagree ... of the Shi'ite minority and release some 660 Kuwaitis who disappeared during the Gulf crisis.

After two days of talks in Helsinki at the weekend with his Russian counterpart, the US secretary of state, Warren Christopher, said Yevgeny Primakov had given him an assurance that the oil deal would go ahead only after the UN had lifted sanctions on Iraq.

Mr Christopher said: "My understanding is that that contract . . . is explicitly contingent on Iraq satisfying the UN resolutions and being out from under the oil sanctions."

But Mr Primakov, a Middle East specialist, is known to have kept close contacts with the Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein, after trying unsuccessfully to mediate between the West and Baghdad as a special envoy in the run-up to the Gulf war in 1991.

When Mr Primakov recently replaced the pro-Western Andrei Kozyrev as Russian foreign minister, former US secretary of state James Baker described Mr Primakov's role in that period as "unhelpful".

The Iraqi oil deal is the first sign of Russia's emerging policy to boost its political and trade links with its former client Arab states.

Russia has confirmed a separate deal with Baghdad to train Iraqi oil experts at the Russian Gubkin Oil and Gas Academy and to send Russian petrochemical specialists to Iraq. Baghdad is determined to give Russian oil firms preferential treatment once the UN lifts its sanctions.

After the Helsinki talks, Mr Primakov insisted there was "no basis" to consider that the Russian-US relationship was in crisis. He said the meeting was "very fruitful. As Americans like to say, it was a very business-like meeting." ... dangerous for our mutual relations and also for the whole world."

Mr Christopher said their relationship had got off to a good start, professing himself pleasantly surprised by "the attitudes of openness he brought, and the willingness to recognise differences and manage them".

But despite the diplomatic words, Mr Christopher knows he faces a much tougher interlocutor in Mr Primakov than he had previously in Mr Kozyrev.

Peres opts for early elections

Derek Brown in Jerusalem

ISRAEL faces more than three months of bitter politicking over the Middle East peace process, following Sunday's announcement by the prime minister, Shimon Peres, of early general elections.

The date favoured by Mr Peres is May 28, though polling may be delayed for a week or two following inter-party negotiations.

The move had been widely predicted, with Mr Peres and the ruling Labour-led coalition galloping ahead of the opposition in all opinion polls. The polls also suggest Mr Peres has a lead of up to 20 per cent over his main rival, Benyamin Netanyahu of the Likud party.

This year, for the first time, Israelis will be voting not only for the party of their choice in nationwide list-based elections, but also directly for the prime minister.

The government wants to increase its wafer-thin majority in the Knesset (parliament) in advance of two key peace moves, which are likely to become the main election issues.

In May, it is due to open detailed talks with the PLO on a permanent peace treaty. The talks, expected to last several years, will address the most explosive of issues dividing Israelis and Palestinians: the future of Jerusalem, the Jewish settlements, the Palestinian refugees, and the status and borders of Palestine itself.

With the PLO talks looming, Israel is already embroiled in detailed and tortuous peace negotiations with Syria, focused on terms for the return of the Golan Heights, captured in 1967.

Mr Peres had hoped for an early breakthrough so that he could substitute a general election for the referendum promised by the government on the outcome of the Golan talks. But with the US-sponsored negotiations likely to go on for months, he evidently decided instead to cash in on the tide of public sympathy flowing heavily in the government's favour since the November 4 assassination of Yitzhak Rabin.

Comment, page 13

Amnesty warns Arafat on abuses

Ian Black

AMNESTY International has issued a sharp warning to the Palestinian president, Yasser Arafat, not to permit human rights abuses by his security forces — and urged countries which back the peace process with Israel to be more vigilant.

In an unusual move, Amnesty's secretary-general, Pierre Sané, said on Monday — as Mr Arafat was being sworn in as president — that there could be no "special pleading" by the Palestinians because of their own suffering under the Israeli occupation.

"Human rights abuses are being justified by the need to ensure the success of the peace process," Mr Sané said. "Public opinion is being manipulated in order to obtain tacit approval of violations and restrictions."

Mr Sané's comments followed a meeting with Mr Arafat in Gaza last week in which the Palestinian leader failed to promise that the work of human rights groups would not be hindered. Mr Arafat said no one was "above the law", but refused to commit himself to end abuses.

Amnesty is concerned because of arbitrary detentions of suspected Palestinian opponents of the peace process.

Reports of torture in detention have been rife and six prisoners have died in custody. State security courts have held trials in secret. Nine separate bodies, equally unaccountable, handle security matters.

Mr Arafat won elections last month and took his oath of office before the acting head of the Palestine National Council, Salim al-Zaanoun, and chief justice, Qusai al-Abadleh. The ceremony took place at the headquarters of the Palestinian legislative council in Gaza.

Under his self-rule deal with Israel, Mr Arafat will head a Palestinian government during an interim period until both sides agree on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Talks are to begin in May but progress is likely to be delayed by Israel's forthcoming general election.

Mr Arafat told Mr Sané last week that he was under pressure from both Israel and the United States to crack down on enemies of the peace process — mainly militant Islamists. But Amnesty's message is that he must now be treated like any other leader and accept responsibility for his government's actions.

"We shouldn't take it for granted that Palestine will be different from other Arab states when it comes to human rights protection," Mr Sané said.

"And governments supporting the peace process are not living up to their international obligations in ensuring that human rights standards are maintained. We need to exercise the same degree of scrutiny as we do with other regimes. There can be no special pleading."

Amnesty has also criticised Israel for human rights abuses and urged it to ban the use of torture, including the "physical pressure" currently permitted.

● Palestinians scuffled with Israeli soldiers in the West Bank on Monday during protests against Israeli restrictions on movement outside PLO-ruled towns, witnesses said.

Israel erected roadblocks around the towns of Ramallah and Qalqilya, barring Palestinians from leaving and Israelis from entering.

An Israeli army spokeswoman said the closures were imposed "for security reasons".

The Week

A CAR bomb killed at least 17 people outside the offices of the newspaper Le Soir d'Algerie in the centre of Algiers on Sunday. Algerian authorities have blamed a series of recent bombings on Muslim militants fighting to topple the government.

ZAIREAN troops ringed a Rwandan refugee camp in Kibumba to start an operation to put pressure on a million refugees to go home voluntarily.

SRI LANKAN troops went on the rampage in the east of the country over the weekend, killing at least 24 Tamil civilians and wounding at least 25 others.

THE DIPLOMATIC row between Spain and Belgium over a Brussels court decision to free two suspected Basque terrorists instead of extraditing them escalated as Spain announced that it was suspending a crucial immigration agreement among key EU countries.

IN A MARKED departure from the teachings of the Vatican, French Roman Catholic bishops have recommended the use of condoms to combat Aids.

[illegible] guerrillas in the mountainous region near San Luis, some 200km from the capital, Bogota.

PRACTISING homosexuals should be ordained as priests as a matter of justice and compassion, the Archbishop of Cape Town, Desmond Tutu, said.

THE INDIAN government said it was prepared to have talks with former Kashmiri guerrillas to try to end a six-year revolt against Indian rule in the region.

RADOVAN KARADZIC, the Bosnian Serb leader indicted for war crimes by a UN tribunal, showed he was still a force to be reckoned with by making a high-profile tour of Banja Luka, the biggest city under Serb control.

Washington Post, page 15

NORTH Korea has had second thoughts on a decision to seek international assistance for its flood victims and has told foreign relief agencies not to organise new appeals for help.

HAITI experienced its first peaceful handover of power from one freely-elected president to another when Jean-Bertrand Aristide handed over the presidency to René Préval.

Washington Post, page 15

AT LEAST 11 people were killed in a pile-up involving 250 cars on a fog-bound motorway in northern Italy.

Innocent left to rot in Nigeria's jails

Chris McGreal in Lagos

WITH little else to do but pick at his lice and close his ears to the wheezing, near-naked mass around him, Benedict Kehinde sometimes wondered if it would not have been better to have been convicted.

He would still have been welcomed to Kirikiri prison, in Lagos, with a pummelling by the other inmates until his ribs cracked. And he would still have been forced to sleep with the "shit bucket" spilling on to him until a new prisoner arrived as the virgin of the cell.

But the Nigerian prison system treats those who have been sentenced marginally better than the masses waiting endlessly for a trial. Perhaps he would have risen to be the all-powerful "cell boss" who made life a kind of hell for others.

As it was, Mr Kehinde, like most Nigerian prisoners, spent seven years in Kirikiri and was never convicted of any crime.

Baba Gana Kingibe, the internal affairs minister, made the unusual admission recently that there was something appallingly wrong with Nigeria's judicial and prison system. The wheels of justice turn so slowly that two-thirds of the inmates — more than 35,000 people — are awaiting trial. Some have been held as long as 10 years.

Many do not survive the violence, starvation rations and disease that have led Nigeria's Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO) to call the country's jails "tombs without tombstones".

Mr Kehinde, now aged 43 and begging on the streets of Lagos, admits that he was illegally hooking his shack home to overhead power cables when the police descended. He took it in his stride until he was accused not of stealing electricity but of sabotaging the power grid — an offence that carries up to life imprisonment.

The police said they needed time to investigate. A judge sent Mr Kehinde to Kirikiri prison, which is filled to capacity twice over.

"It was a big shock that first time I saw the cell. There was no room for me. The men were like the dead. Even the beggars on the street have more clothes. Even the beggars are not so starving. I thought if they put me in there I would never come out alive," he said.

As he stood dumbfounded, a fist struck Mr Kehinde behind the ear. He staggered into other prisoners. It was the excuse they needed to "punish" him. He collapsed under the blows and kicks until he lay coughing blood on to the filthy cell floor.

The ritual beating over, new prisoners are hauled before the "cell boss" and assessed a "state tax" for his coffers. Mr Kehinde thought it wise to hand over what little money had not been taken by the police.

Kirikiri was built to hold 704 inmates. Most of the 1,800 prisoners crammed into its cells sleep in shifts. The privileged have cardboard between them and the cold concrete floor. There is little natural light and ventilation. Some jails were built when Queen Victoria was Nigeria's supreme ruler.

Food is the daily obsession. The government budgets 10 US cents a day to feed each prisoner. Water is equally scarce. Osaze Lanre Ehonwa, head of the CLO's prison investigations, estimates that dozens of prisoners die in Nigerian jails each week.

Medical care is virtually non-existent. Even when the doctors are able to help, the CLO says the prison warders usually steal the prescribed drugs. "To call this anything other than murder is to collaborate in the pogrom being perpetrated in the prisons," the CLO said in a report.

Between battling hunger and sleep deprivation, Mr Kehinde also had to survive the routine violence for infractions of the cell boss's rules, or from sadistic warders who run an elaborate system of theft and corruption.

Prison guards even hire out inmates as cheap labour on construction sites and factories. The warders pocket the pay.

Mr Kehinde would have welcomed the chance to get out of his cell, but those on remand are considered more likely to try to escape.

Mr Kehinde walked free in October, when a judge finally ruled that the police had no real evidence against him.

Police seize a student demonstrating outside Japan's embassy in Seoul, South Korea, against Japanese claims to two islands. Tokyo also faces a possible row with China over two other islands. The disputes have been sparked by Japan's plans for a 320km economic zone around its shores PHOTO: AHN YOUNG-JOON

189 die in Caribbean plane crash

Ian Traynor in Bonn and Keith Harper

ALMOST 200 people, mostly [illegible] were believed dead last week in the shark-infested waters of the Caribbean after an illegal flight by a chartered Boeing 757 crashed just off the Dominican Republic.

There were no known survivors among the 176 passengers and 13 crew. A two-mile stretch of wreckage was bobbing on the sea, including bodies, seat cushions, empty life rafts, life jackets and oil slicks. Pilots saw sharks circling.

The German authorities said the Boeing, chartered by the Alas Nacionales airline, had no licence to fly to Berlin and Frankfurt, its destinations, and had no landing permission. Some reports said the plane was not insured.

"The plane was not permitted to fly to Germany," said Volker Mattern of the German transport ministry. "Before it flies, the airline must contact the air authorities in the target country, and Alas Nacionales did not do that."

The tour operator, Vural Oeger of Hamburg-based Oeger Tours, said the airline switched from a planned Boeing-767 to the Boeing-757 shortly before take-off because the 767's hydraulic system was malfunctioning.

But Rosamarie Meichsner, a spokeswoman for Schoenefeld airport in Berlin, said the planes were switched because the flight was underbooked for a 767, which holds about 300 people. The 757 holds 224 passengers. A German transport ministry spokesman said that the 767 had flying permission for Germany, but the replacement did not. However, Mr Oeger claimed that no landing permit was needed when a plane was substituted at short notice.

The Boeing disappeared within three minutes of take-off from the Dominican Republic's Puerto Plata airport.

Yeltsin seeks West's secrets

David Hearst in Moscow

PRESIDENT BORIS YELTSIN gave his beleaguered prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, 10 days last week to produce a plan to refinance and re-equip the entire Russian army and defence industry: a sign that the president is preparing to batten down the pre-election hatches.

Mr Yeltsin accused Western security services of undermining Russia's military potential, and ordered a radical programme of hi-tech rearmament.

He claimed that Western special services had organised a "brain drain" of Russia's most talented military scientists to get Russia's secrets and weaken its high technology potential. Speaking to the national security council, he ordered intelligence chiefs to step up their efforts to secure for Russia the West's high-technology secrets.

EU reels at charges of disarray during crises

John Palmer in Brussels and Martin Walker in Washington

ACCUSATIONS from the United States that the European Union is too divided to manage crises on its own doorstep were received with undisguised embarrassment in Brussels last week.

The president of the European Commission, Jacques Santer, wants EU governments to agree to significant changes in the way foreign and security policy is decided, and to make this a priority for the Maastricht treaty review conference in Turin next month.

While the Bosnian crisis has long been cited by Washington as an example of EU inertia, the latest catalyst for criticism is last week's confrontation between Greece and Turkey over the Aegean islet of Imia.

"While President Clinton was on the phone with Athens and Ankara, the Europeans were literally sleeping through the night," the assistant US secretary of state, Richard Holbrooke, said. "You have to wonder why Europe does not seem capable of taking decisive action in its own theatre."

Nearly a week after the Aegean confrontation, the European Commission last week issued its first public pronouncement on it. But it did little more than deplore the dangers of armed conflict and express relief that both sides had pulled back.

Blame for the political paralysis of the past week is mainly being laid at the doorstep of Italy's weak EU presidency.

Mr Holbrooke's criticisms and those of other senior US diplomats are felt all the more keenly in Brussels because of the role Washington played when it took the diplomatic lead from the EU to broker the Bosnian peace accord.

Euro buck passing, page 14

Keating fails to deliver killer punch

Christopher Zinn in Sydney

THE AUSTRALIAN prime minister, Paul Keating, narrowly defeated his conservative rival, John Howard, in the first debate of the federal election campaign at the weekend. But political analysts said he failed to deliver the decisive victory he so desperately needed to revive his flagging campaign before the poll on March 2.

In the eagerly awaited televised contest, Mr Keating, fighting to save Labor after 13 years in power, appealed to voters not to turn their backs on the government's economic reforms and his diplomatic opening to Asia.

"If people believe they can give three years to the opposition — to a party trying to copy-cat the government — to adopt the government's policies, I assure them that the fire will go out," he said.

A poll of the studio audience gave Mr Keating 51 per cent and Mr Howard 49 per cent. But it may not be enough. "There was no killer punch," said Paul Lynham, a political commentator. "I don't think Howard has come away significantly down in his standing in the community. I don't think Keating has done himself an enormous amount of good."

Mr Howard, however, hit a nerve with the electorate when he said: "This present government has now been in power 13 years [illegible] developed all the signs of arrogance, of being out of touch, of taking people for granted."

It was a defining moment for Mr Howard, who has lost one election to Labor and was dumped by his party in 1989. Since then he has reinvented himself, developing from what he calls the "radical conservative" of the eighties to a "tolerant conservative".

Some observers doubt Mr Howard's ability to lead Australia. Alan Ramsey, the Sydney Morning Herald's chief political commentator, said: "He would make a solid but very unspectacular prime minister, and a very conservative one."

But the national mood for a change is strong after 13 years of Labor rule, and the polls put Mr Howard's opposition coalition of the Liberal National parties about eight to 10 points ahead.

After 22 years in parliament, Mr Howard knows that if he can avoid scaring the voters with plans to overhaul radically the industrial relations and Medicare health system, his place in The Lodge, the prime minister's official Canberra residence, is almost assured.

The Labor ascendancy of the 1980s was largely made possible by the vicious leadership battles that divided the Liberal National coalition. Mr Howard took over as party leader in 1985, lost an election in 1987 and survived a challenge, but was deposed in 1989.

But continuing instability in the party gave him his chance and in early 1995 he was unanimously voted back to the leadership.

Mr Howard released his pitch for the important so-called ethnic vote when he unveiled the coalition's immigration policies last week. The issue has been a damaging one for him since 1988 when he said: "I wouldn't like to see the rate of Asian immigration go any higher."

Qatar's emir upsets neighbours

A democratising sheikh is bucking tradition, writes **Kathy Evans**

GW. Feb. 18.96

THE NEW emir of the tiny Gulf state of Qatar, Sheikh Hamed bin Khalifa al Thani, is under pressure from other ruling families in the Gulf to "see the error of his ways" and fall into line with "traditional" policies.

The principal pawn in the hands of the Gulf states is the emir's father, Sheikh Khalifa al Thani, whom he overthrew last summer.

According to high-level sources in Qatar, the deposed emir still controls an estimated $3 billion of the emirate's financial reserves, which he refuses to hand back. Qatar is having difficulty paying its bills and financing the huge investment required to develop its extensive gas reserves.

It is not only the content but the style of Sheikh Hamed's rule that has upset his Gulf neighbours.

Unlike other Gulf kings and emirs, Sheikh Hamed regularly talks to the press, explaining his policies and ideas. He has also ended censorship and talks of allowing the election of a national assembly.

Sheikh Hamed, aged 46, has sought better relations with Iran and Iraq, both of which are viewed with suspicion by other Gulf states.

Despite public warnings from the Saudis, he wants to sign an important gas deal with Israel. Other Gulf states want commercial ties with Israel put on hold until a comprehensive peace treaty is agreed by all Arab states.

Two months ago, Sheikh Hamed walked out in protest at the appointment of a Saudi national to head the regional Gulf Co-operation Council. It was the first effective challenge by any Gulf state to the Big Brother role played by Saudi Arabia in the region.

The emir's "sins" were compounded recently by his decision to let the Bahraini opposition movement appear on Qatar state television. The interview coincided with an upsurge in unrest in Bahrain.

"This guy in Qatar is pushing it," a prominent Saudi official said. "It's not that we want to overthrow him — that would be too much — but we just want him to behave, and see the error of his ways."

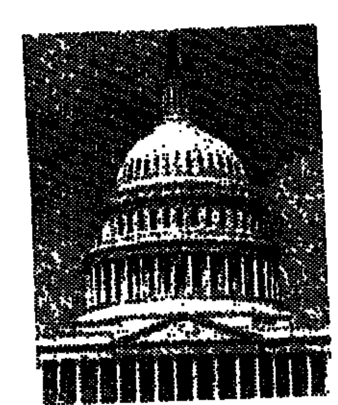
The Gulf states now appear to be getting back at the young emir by favouring his father. Sheikh Khalifa, ensconced in Abu Dhabi's lavish Intercontinental Hotel, is still treated as a head of state.

Qatari officials play down suggestions that the loss of financial reserves is affecting the economy.

"There is cash in the name of the previous emir, but this can't affect our progress and projects. Our country is a rich country," the foreign minister, Sheikh Hamed bin Jassim, said.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
February 18 1996

Buchanan's success leaves Dole groping



The US this week

Martin Walker

DESPITE all the glum predictions of a tedious and predictable 1996 election campaign between Bill Clinton and Bob Dole, the race is now electric with excitement. Steve Forbes came from nowhere to remind us that money still talks loudly in US politics. Then the underfunded Pat Buchanan surprised everyone by winning the Alaska straw poll. An unimportant fluke, sniffed the pundits. But Buchanan squashed Senator Phil Gramm to win the Louisiana caucus, and the campaign headed off to Iowa with all bets off and the race wide open. [illegible] Forbes to come in a convincing third with 18 per cent. The Forbes phenomenon fell back to score a miserable 10 per cent of the vote, which had cost him nearly $1,000 each through his lavish TV ads. Gramm won only 9 per cent of the vote, and must now be horribly close to political oblivion. His campaign is broke, and he can hardly raise more money on the strength of the humiliation in Iowa.

Buchanan stunned the Republican party establishment with his victory in Louisiana, and his even more unexpected success in Iowa, where he had so little organisation on the ground that his get-out-the-vote phone banks were dialling long distance from his squads of volunteers in New Hampshire. (Forbes hired commercial firms to do his phoning.) Louisiana and Iowa have established Buchanan as the rightwing champion, and brought ideology, religion and the anti-abortion crusade back to the forefront of the Republican presidential race.

"This is a great victory for the new conservatism of the heart, a conservatism of faith, family and country," Buchanan declared, claiming he would be set to win the Republican nomination after carrying the rest of the South in the Super-Tuesday primary on March 12. That is no longer as outlandish as it once might have sounded. Money has begun to flow into the Buchanan camp at the rate of $500,000 a day. The White House can hardly restrain its glee at the prospect of campaigning against Buchanan, constantly reminding voters just how far to the right and how shrill some Republicans can be.

The one worry for the White House is that Lamar Alexander's campaign appears at last to be taking off. He comes from Al Gore's native Tennessee, and was a good friend of Clinton when they were both go-ahead and none-too-ideological Southern governors in the 1980s. Clinton and Gore have always feared most a campaign against the likeable, non-extremist former governor of Tennessee.

A great deal of "opposition research" has been done into Alexander's financial background, and some of his investments would make Hillary Clinton green with envy. She had to put down $1,000 to make more than $93,000 in cattle futures. Alexander invested just one dollar to get back nearly $1 million from his flutter in local newspaper shares. We shall be hearing lots more of Alexander's winning financial ways, including the salary of some $300,000 a year he is still being paid by his Tennessee law firm, despite the demands of the campaign trail.

However, Alexander is so far only a prospect rather than a threat. Dole remains at least nominally the front-runner, and Forbes has lots more money to throw at the TV sets of New Hampshire. As so often in the past, New Hampshire looks like being the decisive battle ground. Iowa has performed its traditional job of winnowing the field. New Hampshire will sort out the pecking order, and establish whether the religious right and the cultural conserv- [illegible] Ronald Reagan, won 13 of the 21 Louisiana delegates, in an upset victory over Gramm, the Texan senator whose campaign was left struggling to survive in the wake of the Iowa caucus. A year ago, Gramm, in characteristically crude terms, observed that "the best friend to have in politics is ready money". He then had a lot of it, and has since run through almost $20 million with very little to show for it. Gramm used his war chest as a blunt weapon to intimidate other conservatives to stay out of the race. It helped stay the hand of the moralist and Book Of Virtues author William Bennett, and former Congressman Jack Kemp.

But last month Gramm began ordering campaign staff out of hotels and into cheaper rented apartments, where they have to share bedrooms. Down last week to his last $1.5 million, he decided to throw it all into a TV ad blitz in Iowa, saying he had to come in the first three to stay in the race. His poor showing may have terminally damaged his presidential hopes.

It is striking that Gramm has spent even more money than Forbes, but has much less to show for it. By the orthodox rules, Gramm ran an impeccable campaign. He built strong organisations, staffed by professional staff and with backing from local party chieftains, in Iowa and New Hampshire, and in states like Florida and Louisiana with important early straw polls. All the organising skills in politics are only as good as the candidate and message they serve: Gramm has little charm and has trouble in conveying his message. One of the three or four most conservative members of the US Senate, Gramm was made to look the wimpish moderate in the Louisiana race.

"We knew Pat could not lose, because God is looking for a man who will stand up for the truths of his Scripture against the Devil's man who is now in the White House who supports sodomy and abortion," said the Reverend Bill Shanks, of the New Covenant Fellowship, one of the fundamentalist churches which organised Louisiana to secure Buchanan's surprise victory.

"Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war," chanted Irv Magri as he concluded his Vote Buchanan appeal and left the pulpit of the Calvary Church last week. A former New Orleans cop and another of [illegible] States back in 1971, "when they failed to charge Jane Fonda with treason and sedition and giving aid and comfort to the communist enemy in North Vietnam". But Magri knows his politics. On the eve of the Iowa caucus, he said Buchanan would get "about 21 per cent of the vote" on the basis of the informal polls run by the Christian network.

"God was with us. We went to the polls with a hymn on our lips and God in our hearts," the Reverend Shanks told the Christian Broadcasting radio network, on the day after the Louisiana poll results. He was speaking on the Randall Terry Hour, named after the founder of Operation Rescue, the militant anti-abortion campaign which seeks to close abortion clinics through civil disobedience, and which is to the Buchanan campaign what the SAS is to the British army.

THE Randall Terry Hour is one of the few public elements of the anti-abortion communications network, and is dedicated and tireless in its support for Buchanan. Shanks was rallying the Christian zealots in New Hampshire and in Iowa and all the other primary states, which will take new heart from their triumph in Louisiana and good showing in Iowa.

"I have been to prison 12 times for my beliefs, praise the Lord, for I have never been arrested but that we find new converts to the cause inside those prison walls," Shanks said. "More than 70,000 of us have been arrested, which is more arrests than the civil rights movement ever suffered, but we, too, shall overcome because our cause is just."

Christian conservatives were the key to Buchanan's success in both states, and returned sufficient numbers to influence higher than expected turnouts. In Louisiana, voters who identified themselves as "religious right" were 56 per cent for Buchanan, and 31 per cent for Gramm, while "anti-abortion" voters went for Buchanan by a margin of 59:30. The only group of voters among whom Gramm had a majority were the affluent, those with incomes of more than $75,000 a year. Gramm has been one of the most adamant foes of abortion in Congress. But he voted to approve President Clinton's two nominees to the Supreme Court. Neither is hostile to [illegible] Buchanan campaigned on the most conservative social platform to be offered to American voters in a generation, opposing all gay rights and pledging to end all forms of preferences for blacks and other minorities, and outlawing abortion even in cases of rape or incest. "We should in no circumstances take the innocent life of that baby. If there's killing to be done, let's kill the rapists," was one of the lines that won Buchanan the fervent support of the religious right.

Social conservatism is combined with a radical populism in Buchanan's economics that would tear up all free-trade treaties and erect new protectionist walls around the United States' borders. On the Mexican border, Buchanan promises a real wall to stop illegal immigrants, 2,000 miles long and manned by the US troops brought home from Bosnia. In the unlikely event that Buchanan goes on to win the Republican nomination, it will be fascinating to see how many working-class Democratic votes he can attract with his opposition to the North American Free Trade Agreement and to the Gatt world trade pact. Clinton split his party to get those treaties signed, and the left and the trade unions have not quite forgiven him.

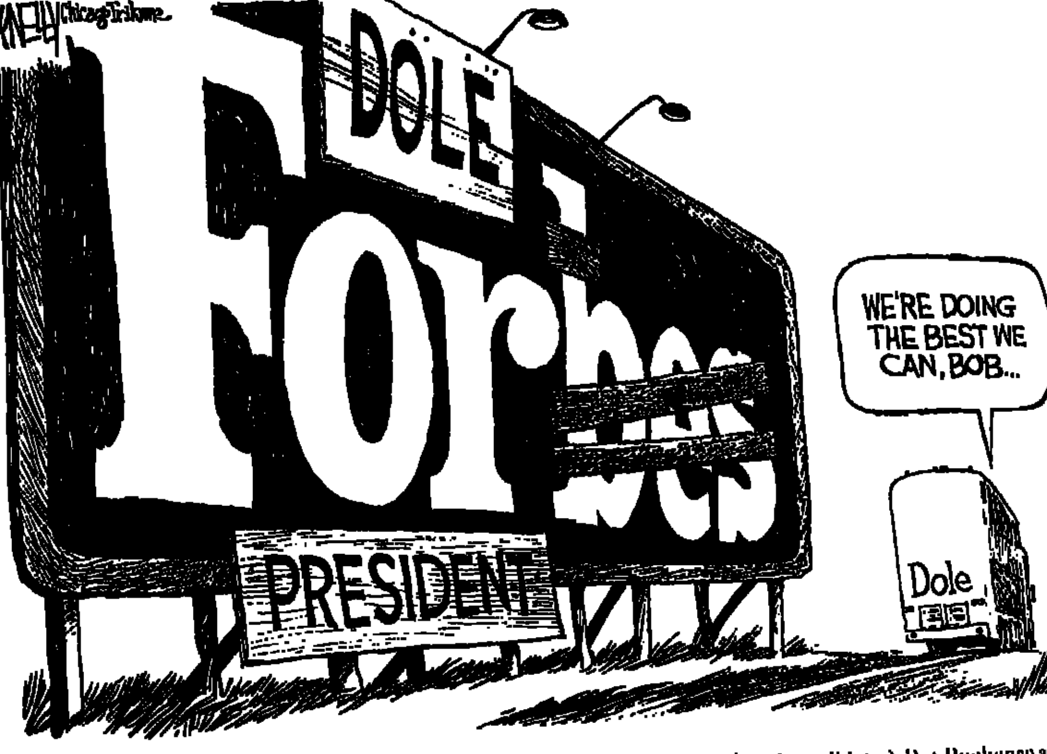
In the various Republican candidates' debates, Buchanan is by far the most effective debunker of Forbes and the flat tax. "Dreamed up by a bunch of boys one night down in the yacht basin," Buchanan sneers. "The idle rich won't pay a dime in taxes if Steve Forbes has his way." That is the kind of thing that Clinton is planning to say if his prayers are granted and Forbes becomes the Republican nominee. (George Stephanopoulos, the president's political adviser, says he will simply take the summer off if Republicans pick Forbes as presidential candidate.) But Buchanan as the nominee would prompt a very different campaign, with the battle ground the traditional blue-collar patriots known as the Reagan Democrats. They are Ethnic, Catholic, Patriotic, and they make up a lot of the vote in Illinois and Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Buchanan's success in Louisiana propelled him into the front rank of Republican candidates with Dole and Forbes. His success in Iowa then gave him the momentum to go into the New Hampshire primary as Dole's main rival. Despite being born and raised in Washington DC, and [illegible] White House staff experience, Buchanan is the only candidate who can rival Forbes's claim to be "an outsider", a rebel against the political establishment. In the Louisiana vote 48 per cent told exit pollsters that they voted for Buchanan because "it's time for an outsider".

OUTSIDERS usually have to be rich enough, like Ross Perot or the multi-millionaire Forbes, to win the celebrity and credibility that takes politicians decades to acquire. Buchanan started with little money, raising $[illegible] million to the $20 million of Gramm. But he enjoys huge name recognition from his 1992 challenge to President Bush and from his TV shows. Buchanan's shoe-string campaign took in more than $1.5 million in the week after his success in Alaska, and his new credibility after Louisiana brought him new funds to challenge the TV ads of Dole and Forbes on equal terms in New Hampshire.

The campaign spending reports published last week, show that Forbes spent $14 million in the last three months of last year, more than Dole and Gramm combined. Buchanan by contrast spent a mere $3 million.

The only politician who outspent Forbes last year was President Clinton. The Democratic National Committee spent $15 million on TV ads directed solely at marginal suburban districts in 20 states. They portrayed him as the only defender of Medicare, education and the environment, with the slogan "President Clinton: standing firm to protect people". Since these ads were not run nationwide, this pro-Clinton ad campaign went almost unnoticed. It may help explain why Clinton's approval ratings are above 55 per cent, the highest they have been since his first year in office.



GUARDIAN WEEKLY
February 18 1996

Muslim rebels hold key to fortune

But for a growing revolt, the island of Mindanao could lead the Philippines to prosperity, writes **Nick Cumming-Bruce** in Camp Abubakre

JABBING at a blackboard covered in diagrams and arrows, "Commander Bond" bellowed: "In any war, the best formation is information."

With that Mohammed Sabber, trained in Afghanistan but nicknamed after his British film hero, wound up a class on ambush tactics for mojahedin at Camp Abubakre, the "military academy" of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front on the southern Philippines island of Mindanao.

The two-storey wooden building which doubles as classroom and dormitory is situated in well-forested hills two hours trek from the nearest road. A network of villages makes up the MILF headquarters, the nerve centre for a rebel army of Muslim zealots demanding an autonomous Islamic state. The MILF is a potent threat to Manila's control of an island of lavish natural resources and endemic violence.

The MILF's claim to have built up an army of 180,000 men may be pure fantasy. But the government forces' estimate of 7,000 to 10,000 almost certainly [illegible] to the MILF's muscle and its capacity to destabilise an island central to President Fidel Ramos's ambitions for the Philippines.

Christian-dominated Mindanaon cities like Cagayan de Oro in the north and the tuna-fishing centre of General Santos in the south-east are riding a boom. Their success has raised awareness of how the island can help the Philippines to emulate its more prosperous neighbours Malaysia and Indonesia.

But Mindanao's prospects rest on finding the peace that has eluded the southern Muslim heartlands round Cotabato. Feudal clans nurse memories of the independent sultanate that was annexed by Manila in 1938, and decades of conflict have left a legacy of poverty.

To meet the threat from the MILF and more militant splinter groups, Manila has committed more than half its army to Mindanao. But its attempts to deploy reinforcements in MILF-controlled areas last year provoked counter-moves by the MILF which increased the tension.

More than 70,000 people died in the war between the Manila government and Muslim separatists — then led by the Moro National Liberation Front — in the early 1970s. A raid on the small town of Ipil last year, in which gunmen killed 47 people, looted six banks and burned down the town centre, provided a vivid reminder of how violence can flare in Mindanao.

Twenty years after the agreement ending the war was signed in Tripoli, Manila and the MNLF seem closer than ever to a deal. They will start a new round of talks in early March. But the MNLF no longer commands the support it did in the 1970s: young Muslims have turned to the more militant MILF.

If the talks go well in March, MNLF leaders say, they could move to Jakarta and a formal peace treaty could be signed, with the blessing of the Organisation of Islamic Countries by the end of the year.

The MNLF's timetable looks optimistic, given the slight progress achieved in talks in December, but it reflects the conviction that the two sides can do business.

General Ramos, working for a place in history as the president who set a battered and demoralised Philippines on the road to Asian tiger status, is aware that any trouble in Mindanao could ruin his economic legacy.

MNLF influence has waned steadily as wrangles about autonomy have dragged on without benefit to the welfare of a war-weary populace.

Meanwhile the MILF has grown on the back of a Muslim militancy that appeals to a frustrated younger generation and is supported by militant Islamic organisations overseas.

For the moment MNLF and MILF leaders maintain a loose co-operation, even if turf wars between subordinates can end, as one did last week, in fatal gunfights.

The territorial formula thrashed out between Manila and the MNLF appears to be leading to an autonomous zone made up of six Mindanao provinces and two or three cities, far short of the 13 provinces envisaged in the 1976 Tripoli agreement held up by the MILF as the blueprint for peace.

The question of how MILF leaders will respond to a Manila-MNLF pact worries government and military leaders. The government forces are more numerous and better equipped. And even round Cotabato, the MILF has little mass support. The civilian population is disillusioned with the rampant corruption of Mindanao's Muslim politicians, the endless MNLF demands for pay-offs and the arbitrary MILF "taxes" on their crops.

But a series of bloody strikes on Mindanao's economic centres is well within the rebels' capacity. "We will try our best not to have any conflict with any group," Murad, the MILF chief of staff, declared. "But if we can't agree, there is no way but to resort to armed struggle."

Manila
PHILIPPINES
Cagayan de Oro
MINDANAO
Ipil
50 miles
Camp Abubakre
Cotabato
Sulu Sea
BASILAN ISLAND
General Santos
Celebes Sea

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Heseltine's pay slip puts Government in the red

MICHAEL HESELTINE, the deputy prime minister, embarrassed the Government, and outraged Opposition MPs and business leaders when he told a private dinner party that, as a small businessman in the past, he had been "quite skilful at stringing along creditors" by delaying his payment of bills.

It sounded engagingly truthful, and he insisted that the creditors of his publishing firm did, eventually, get paid. But the Government has been urging firms to pay their bills more promptly, and is even considering legislation to give them a statutory right to demand interest on late payments. In the meantime, the National Audit Office is investigating the Government's own bad record of paying private firms' bills.

There was serious concern in Britain in 1990, when the average payment period rose to 60 days (invoices commonly stipulate 30). With the recovery from recession, this has improved to an average 48 days. The Prime Minister, John Major, told the Commons that "the Government, and not least Michael Heseltine, has done a great deal to encourage prompt payment". But figures revealed that, when the Department of Trade and Industry was headed by Mr Heseltine, 16 per cent [redacted] outbreak of indignation about "fat cat" salaries — once again involving the chief executive of British Gas, Cedric Brown.

Concern about boardroom excesses began 15 months ago when it emerged that Mr Brown had been awarded a 75 per cent pay rise to £475,000 a year. He will retire in April, when British Gas splits itself into two companies, but will leave with another lavish payment.

BG, faced with a doubled level of customer complaints and huge losses on gas contracts, agreed to give him a leaving package of pension and other perks which could cost as much as £4.26 million.

Labour leader Tony Blair asked the Prime Minister whether the package was justified in the light of BG's poor performance. That, said Mr Major, was a matter for the shareholders.

NEIL HAMILTON, who was forced to resign as corporate affairs minister in 1994, at the height of a row about Tory sleaze, this week found himself facing new allegations — that he failed to declare thousands of pounds worth of free hospitality from US Tobacco. It is claimed that in the late 1980s he accepted free accommodation at hotels in London and New York while he was helping the company to try to overturn a proposed ban on one of its products, Skoal Bandits, a chewing tobacco linked with cancer. The allegations are to be submitted to the parliamentary ombudsman, Sir Gordon Downey, for investigation.

Mr Hamilton, who this week failed in his bid for the leadership of the Thatcherite 92 Group of Tory backbenchers, was recently criticised by the Commons committee on members' interests for failing to declare a free stay at the Ritz hotel in Paris, where he ran up a bill of more than £4,500. The hotel belongs to Mohamed Al-Fayed, the owner of Harrods, from whom Mr Hamilton is also claimed to have accepted payments for asking questions in the Commons. The committee has yet to rule on this.

The MP took out a libel action against the Guardian over its reporting of these allegations, but the action was halted last year because it was held to conflict with rules on parliamentary privilege.

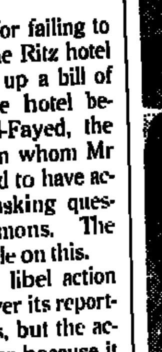
IN ANOTHER example of ministers rejecting advice which they have sought from experts, the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, seems set to turn down the Parole Board's recommendation that "Moors murderer" Myra Hindley should be moved to an open prison.

Ms Hindley, now aged 54, is serving a life sentence for child killings 30 years ago and is held in a high-security prison in Durham. A former Home Secretary, Lord Waddington, ruled in 1990 that she should spend the rest of her life behind bars.

Mr Howard asked the board to consider whether life-sentence mur- [redacted] if only because of the danger of press intrusion.

IT IS ELECTORALLY important to the Tories to be seen as "tough" on law and order. However low their poll rating generally, they have always been ahead of rival parties on this aspect of policy until, two years ago, Labour seized a lead of 14 points. Thanks to falling crime figures, however, that lead has been whittled down to just one point.

But polls can produce paradoxical results. Most (50 per cent) respondents to a Guardian/ICM poll thought that Labour's shadow health minister, Harriet Harman, was right to send her son to a selective grammar school even though her party is opposed to selective education. But most (75 per cent) of the same respondents thought Labour politicians in general should not send their children to selective schools.





Singing in the rain . . . Clergymen, including John Bickersteth (right), former Bishop of Bath and Wells, lead a service against the Newbury bypass as work continues in the background PHOTO: ANDREW TESTER

Peace goes on the march

ABOUT 5,000 people marched along part of the route of the proposed Newbury bypass in what environmentalists claim was the largest single demonstration against road-building in Britain, *writes Alex Bellos*.

Friends of the Earth said: "It was a huge success. The cross-section of people was incredible. There were locals and non-locals, and people of all ages."

A religious service in a field cleared to make way for the road was followed by a short walk to the tent where protesters were admiring their most recent "moral victories" — two of the three security guards who had defected to the camp after allegedly seeing a guard attack one of the protesters.

The protest was predicted to reach a flashpoint this week as bailiffs were due to evict people living in treehouses on the route.

[redacted]

[redacted] Brindle

THE cost of running Britain's social security system is to be slashed by at least a quarter in the most draconian cuts programme seen in the nation's public services, it emerged last week.

Tens of thousands of jobs are at risk and there will be fundamental changes in the way people claim and receive welfare benefits, largely unchanged since the start of the welfare state.

One plan said to be under consideration is a system whereby the onus would pass to claimants to prove their entitlement to benefits. If they could not, they would be refused money.

Jim Boyd, a leader of the biggest civil service union, said: "Scenting election defeat, the Tories are operating a scorched earth policy against the poor and vulnerable people they have failed to help."

The plan to strip a minimum of 25 per cent from the Department of Social Security's running costs budget, currently £3.25 billion, has come in a letter to staff from Ann Bolwell, the department's permanent secretary. She says the cuts must be made over the next two to three years.

The letter was made public 24 hours after Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, made a strong defence of the welfare state and warned that sudden "reforms" coud trigger social disruption of the kind seen recently in riots on the streets of Paris.

In a lecture, Peter Lilley, the Social Security Secretary, said that he was pursuing a gradual programme of sector-by-sector reforms.

The planned running-cost cuts appear to correspond to demands made by the Treasury in last autumn's spending round. In leaked correspondence with William Waldegrave, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Mr Lilley said: "Your proposed settlement on running costs fills me with despair. The impact on operations will be devastating . . . Quite apart from the political fall-out as service becomes more chaotic, I am convinced that we would be cutting off our noses to spite our faces."

It seems that Mr Lilley merely bought time in his negotiations with the Treasury. The cuts programme is expected to deliver relatively few savings next year, 1996/97, but to accelerate sharply thereafter.

Union leaders believe the department's computer systems, already substantially contracted out, will be completely privatised.

They also expect large-scale redundancies among the department's 88,000 staff and a shift to self-assessment by benefit claimants along lines being implemented for taxpayers by the Inland Revenue. The unions claim that they have seen documents suggesting benefit be withheld from any claimant unable to prove entitlement.

Mr Boyd, social security group president of the Public Services, Tax and Commerce Union, said: "The Government wants to treat all claimants like 'bogus' asylum seekers: if you cannot prove your entitlement, you will be written off."

Austin

Classic quibble over cultural relativism

SCHOOLCHILDREN should be taught the superiority of Schubert over their more likely choice of Britpop idols like Blur, the Government's chief curriculum adviser said last week, *writes Barbie Dutter.*

The dead sheep sculpture by Turner Prize winner Damien Hirst was a further example of a prevailing "cultural relativism" which failed to recognise enduring artistic values, said Nick Tate, the chief executive of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

The dominant view, he told a conference in London, was that there were "no differences in value between, say, Schubert's Ave Maria and the latest Blur release, between Milton and Mills and Boon".

He went on: "I am not suggesting that young people should spend all their time studying Jane Austen and Shakespeare or listening to Bach and Mozart. What I am suggesting is that [educators] should give these things their proper value as the best that has been known."

Richard Hoggart, whose book, The Way We Live Now, describes the rise of relativism, endorsed Dr Tate's comments. "If you say there is no distinction between Jeffrey Archer and Shakespeare, you have destroyed a whole set of principles on which Western civilisation has been built, which is that some people are more gifted than others."

But disc jockey John Peel said: "Saying Schubert is better than Blur is like saying Tuesday is better than a piece of string. They are entirely different things."

Jean Aitchison, the Rupert Murdoch Professor of Language at Oxford University, said: "If you tell children that Mills and Boon is bad, they will decide it's marvellous."

Hereditary peers 'to lose Lords vote'

Patrick Wintour

TONY BLAIR last week launched a stinging attack on the hereditary peerage system, saying British democracy could not tolerate an upper chamber of Parliament in which Tory voting fodder held seats not by merit, but because a 300-year-old ancestor might have been "the mistress of a monarch".

Making a wide-ranging speech to popularise Labour's sweeping programme of constitutional reform, the party leader also for the first time raised the prospect of Labour's proposed elected chamber containing some appointed peers of high quality.

He again refused personally to endorse proportional representation, but praised the principle of co-operation with the Liberal Democrats on this agenda, and for the first time backed elected mayors for Britain's big cities.

Mr Blair said as a first step Labour would reform the Lords by removing the right of hereditary peers to vote, before moving, at an unfixed date, to establish an elected second chamber of parliament.

They would be allowed to keep their titles, Labour officials said.

Hereditary peers were the "least defensible part of the British constitution", Mr Blair argued.

"It is in principle wrong and absurd that people should wield power on the basis of birth, not merit or election. What is more, there are over 300 official Tory hereditary peers, 12 Labour and 24 Liberal Democrat. Hundreds more rarely appear, but if they did we could be sure very few would side with Labour or the Liberal Democrats. This is plainly and incontrovertibly politically biased."

Giving the first John Smith memorial lecture, Mr Blair conceded that elected mayors would be controversial within the party, but said they were one way to redress the "dangerous loss of civic pride" in many areas.

He defended Labour's plan to have a different devolution package for Scotland and Wales, saying "they are different countries with different histories". The Welsh Office was a recent creation and there was very little separate Welsh legislation. Scotland on the other hand had once had its own parliament for hundreds of years.

In a counterattack, the Conservative chairman Brian Mawhinney, to the delight of Labour, defended the hereditary principle, arguing that Labour's plans threatened the stability of the country. "It is quite simply the politics of class-driven envy," Dr Mawhinney said.

Robin Cook, the shadow foreign secretary, replied that nothing "could illustrate more clearly the Tories' defence of a tiny élite than Mr Mawhinney's support for the right of aristocrats to vote through laws for the rest of us because they were born into the right families".

On Sunday Mr Blair turned on his party for its "alarming and chilling complacency" in assuming a Labour victory at the next general election was in the bag. In his strongest condemnation yet of apparent over-confidence among Labour members and supporters, he told a party conference in Birmingham: "No one owes us power just because we have been in opposition for 17 years."

He warned that the electorate must not be taken for granted. "Victory will not come unaided . . . It is going to be the longest, toughest campaign of our lives and it has already begun."

Longer 'white list' tightens asylum rules

Alan Travis

MICHAEL HOWARD, the Home Secretary, is to shut the door on asylum seekers from three more countries by extending the official "white list" to include Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania.

The disclosure that the Home Office wants to extend the current seven-strong white list of "safe countries" is contained in a leaked "restricted" internal Foreign Office guidance document.

More than 3,425 asylum applications were received [illegible] countries last year. But only 59 applicants were given asylum or exceptional leave to remain.

The document also shows that the Foreign Office did not give its immediate backing to the inclusion of India and Pakistan on the original list announced by the Home Secretary in the Commons last November.

The inclusion of a particular country in the white list means that asylum claims from its citizens are, according to the document, "likely to be refused". It makes clear that the key criterion for a country to be included in the white list is not its human rights record but the volume of asylum claims it generates and the rate at which the Home Office refuses them.

Amnesty's refugee officer, Richard Dunstan, said: "This shows the Home Office has a clear intention to expand the white list once the current asylum bill is on the statute book to include countries where there are serious human rights concerns."

The inclusion of Kenya will cause particular concern. Last year Baroness Chalker, as overseas aid minister, said there were "still grounds for concern" about the Moi regime.

● The Social Security Secretary, Peter Lilley, last week fought off the threat of a High Court ban on his decision to deprive asylum seekers of welfare benefits.

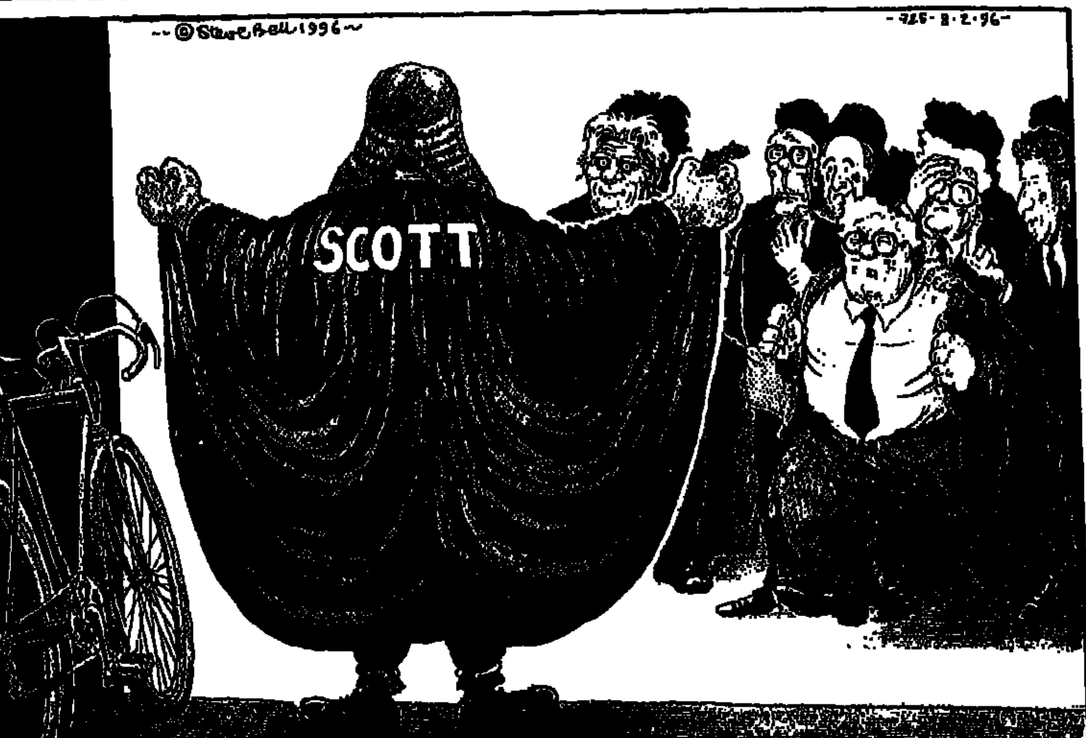
Mr Justice Brooke refused to grant an application by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants to restore asylum seekers' benefits until a legal challenge to the Government's controversial action is settled by the High Court.

The judicial review will take place at the beginning of April at the earliest, when the High Court will also rule on two similar legal challenges by Westminster, and Hammersmith and Fulham councils, in London.



Sir Richard Scott talks to **Richard Norton-Taylor** about the whispering campaign by officials against his arms-to-Iraq report, to be published this week

Whitehall fears its conscience



A MARK OF Whitehall's desperation as it awaits this week's excoriating report on the arms-to-Iraq scandal is the utterly trivial and insidious nature of some aspects of its campaign against the author. Sir Richard Scott cycles to work; that shows how eccentric, how puritanical, how over-virtuous he is, his detractors say.

Sir Richard sighs with a mixture of irritation and bemusement. His practice of cycling to work is entirely pragmatic, he explains. You don't have to travel in the Underground, "to stand like veal calves in a crate". You don't have to wait around for buses, or time exactly each stage of your journey to catch the train. He mentions other judges who cycle to their chambers — the law lord, Lord Woolf, the Appeal Court judge, Leonard Hoffmann, and the High Court judge, Stephen Sedley.

Cycling could be a symbol of two of Sir Richard's most striking characteristics — pragmatism and independence. Whitehall has painted a picture of a judge suffering from delusions of grandeur, of a cavalier disregard for traditional procedures. That is completely to misunderstand the man. Sir Richard is no iconoclast. He simply questions established views, whether it is [redacted] conducted the inquiry — notably by Lord Howe and Douglas Hurd, two former foreign secretaries who have been speaking on behalf of civil servants as much as Tory ministers — as "misguided and wrong". He will deal with criticisms of the inquiry in his report.

What Howe and others are concerned about, of course, is Sir Richard's conclusions on two key issues: the conduct of ministers, officials, and government lawyers which could have led to three former directors of the Matrix Churchill machine tool firm being wrongly imprisoned, and whether Parliament was misled over the Government's policy on arms sales to Iraq.

Sir Richard will not anticipate his findings before his 1,800-page report is published on Thursday. But it is no secret that he was horrified by the way the Matrix Churchill prosecution was handled. He is likely to recommend that never again in criminal cases should ministers be allowed to sign Public Interest Immunity certificates — so-called gagging orders — in the blanket way they did in the Matrix case, where they did not even bother to read the documents they attempted to suppress to see whether they were relevant to the defence.

Sir Richard is also likely to conclude that Parliament was consistently misled. The key question is whether he believes MPs were deliberately misled by ministers, an offence which John Major has said is a resigning matter.

It is not the first time Sir Richard has upset the Whitehall establishment. In 1987, he roundly dismissed the Government's attempts to pre- [redacted] bulwarks of our democratic society," he said.

It is a judgment anxious Whitehall officials might not wish to be reminded about. The context is different, but the themes of secrecy, of the government-knows-best approach are the same.

Why John Major appointed Sir Richard, a judge with a reputation for rigorous independence, to conduct the inquiry is a question that has been asked repeatedly over the past three years by the growing number of ministers and civil servants who have reason to regret the decision. One view is that Lord Mackay, the Lord Chancellor, was so concerned about the charges levelled against government lawyers during the Matrix Churchill arms-to-Iraq trial — whose collapse in November 1992 led to the setting up of the Scott inquiry — that he was determined to recommend a judge who would fearlessly go to the heart of the problem.

Asked, as he always is, why he was chosen for the task, Sir Richard says: "Up to a point I know, but beyond that point I don't." A judge was [redacted] judge had to be chosen. He was picked.

SIR RICHARD Rashleigh Folliott Scott was born 61 years ago in Dehra Dun, in the foothills of the Himalayas where his father, an accomplished horseman, was a colonel in the 2/9th Gurkha Rifles. Sir Richard spent his early years on the North West frontier in the twilight of the Raj before his father was invalided out of the Indian army in 1942. His parents moved to South Africa, to a 500-acre farm on the Mooi river in Natal. He was educated at Michaelhouse, modelled on an English public school. There he excelled both academically and at sport, including boxing, sprinting and rugby.

He went on to read law at Cape Town University and in 1955 won a Commonwealth scholarship to Cambridge, where he was awarded first class honours. He also won a rugby blue as a wing forward in the 1957 varsity match against Oxford.

Sir Richard then won a fellowship to Chicago University. There he met his wife, Rima Ripoll, a New York-born Panamanian studying at a nearby university and an accom- [redacted] to practise at the Bar. "I had to earn my living," he says. He had no "great life plan", and describes his early life as an example of the "theory of drift".

He was elected chairman of the Bar in 1982, where he encouraged steps to be taken to monitor the lack of advancement of black barristers. The following year, he was appointed a Chancery judge where he was admired — especially on the northern circuit — for his straight-talking. It is a quality he admires in others but one distinctly absent from most of the witnesses at the arms-to-Iraq inquiry.

It was the dissembling and circumlocution of witnesses as much as anything which prompted some of Sir Richard's sharp interventions at the inquiry. He once rebuked Whitehall lawyers for giving "junk" advice, a comment which prompted the response from Gerald Hosker, the Treasury Solicitor, that "as a basic principle, it is not necessarily total junk".

On another occasion, Sir Richard told a hapless Ministry of Defence official that "they don't make lavatory seats in a munitions factory". Asked to comment on the criticism that he had been "aggressive", Sir [redacted] apt epithet."

His rise up the judicial ladder led to his appointment first to the Court of Appeal and, in 1994, to the post of Vice-Chancellor, head of the high Court Chancery division. Last month, Lord Mackay appointed him to oversee radical changes in the civil justice system, designed to make it quicker and cheaper, proposed by Lord Woolf.

Sir Richard, meanwhile, has finished a task which will remain on Whitehall's conscience for many years. It was based on evidence which slowly emerged from 200,000 pages of official documents. It was "like peeling an onion", he said. The result is certain to lead to tears.

Time to stop the rot in the body politic

Geoffrey Robertson argues that the Scott report should be used to prise open Whitehall

LORD JUSTICE SCOTT is now being subjected to the very same process which produced the arms-to-Iraq scandal in the first place: a culture within government which requires inconvenient truths to be distorted or suppressed for the better avoidance of what Whitehall terms "presentational difficulties". His report will be judged by the remedy it prescribes for this disease in the body politic.

It does not actually matter, in the long term, who gets Scott's brickbats or bouquets: public office will always attract politicians prone to hypocrisy, just as the public service will have its share of lickspittles. What matters is to have in place a system of government within which those temptations are deterred, by both exposure and by public condemnation.

What the Scott report will detail is a systems failure in modern Westminster democracy. The "Howe Guidelines" of 1985, declaring an embargo on arms-related sales to Iran and Iraq, were an exercise in moral superiority. They soon became unworkable, and were gradually abandoned in the "tilt to Iraq" years leading up to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. Why, Scott will ask, were these politically important changes not merely kept secret but actively misrepresented, so fervently that Parliament and the courts were repeatedly misled?

One positive feature of Whitehall is its internal recording traditions, and a paper-trail of memoranda evidences the intellectual contortions — and very occasional moral agonies — of those who did what one of them described as "the dirty washing". When, over the objections of four ministers, I was allowed to read some 500 pages of this material in order to defend Paul Henderson in the Matrix Churchill trial, I was struck by one irony. Every level of government had contrived to avoid debate over the changes in arms-sale policy towards Iraq — even though, in these late Thatcher years, the supporters of arms sales would have won that debate hands-down. Yet only one minister — the morally insouciant Alan Clark — voiced the apparently unthinkable proposal that the changes might be announced in Parliament.

The reason for this perversion of what we like to describe as the democratic process could be located in the Matrix Churchill documents in one phrase which was repeated as an excuse to avoid doing or saying the right thing: "presentational difficulties". This all-purpose euphemism for the possibility of political embarrassment had become the lodestar of minister and public servant alike, blinding them to their obligations of honesty to Parliament and of ensuring fair trials.

My abiding impression from the Matrix Churchill documents was that these deplorable decisions would never have been taken had those responsible for them been aware they might be made public.

And that, I still think, is the only real remedy against a repetition of the affair. The only way, within Whitehall, to refute an argument from "presentational difficulties" is to point out that there will be even more presentational difficulties if the improper or unprincipled course is followed. In other words, there has to be a real possibility of exposing the decision while those involved may still be in a position of power. That means, at very least, a Freedom of Information Act ensuring that documents of ministerial-level meetings are released within five years (under the present law, at least 30 years must elapse). With protection, too, for "whistleblowers" like the hapless Mark Higson, who had moral scruples about composing misleading letters to MPs, but was frightened by official secrecy laws. Both Thatcher and Major have opposed these reforms by claiming they would undermine ministerial accountability to Parliament.

The Scott report will demonstrate, beyond reasonable doubt, that ministerial accountability to Parliament is a myth, and that democracy does not work when its servants become obsessed with public relations. What Scott will refute for ever is the claim of the Sir Humphrey Appleby character in the television series Yes, Minister that "open government is a contradiction in terms — you can be open, or you can have government". The report will prove, on the contrary, that open government is good government, and that freedom of information can lead to a culture in which decisions are not only better understood, but are better decisions.

Geoffrey Robertson QC defended Paul Henderson at the Matrix Churchill trial. He is the author of Freedom, The Individual And The Law

In Brief

A BILL designed to sweep away the 700-year-old "year and a day rule", governing the time limit for manslaughter and murder charges, sped through its Commons stages with no opposition in under two minutes.

GOVERNMENT embarrassment at the failure of more than half the nation's 11-year-olds to reach the expected standard in maths was compounded when it emerged that officials got the sums wrong by double counting tens of thousands of children who did not make the grade in their written tests.

MORE THAN 100,000 lives could be saved worldwide each year, including 1,000 in the UK, if all asthma patients received modern therapies, said Romain Pauwels, chairman of the Global Initiative for Asthma.

PRESCRIPTION charges are to rise by 25p, provoking renewed protests from doctors and consumer groups that the charges are a tax on the sick.

MORE THAN 50 universities and colleges have merged or are holding merger talks as financial pressures threaten to drive some institutions to the wall.

IN THE same week that the Defence Secretary, [illegible] Portillo, vowed to continue to ban homosexuals in the armed forces, Stonewall, the gay pressure group, submitted new evidence to the Select Committee on the Armed Forces, spearheading its campaign to get the ban repealed.

THE NEPALESE boy brought to Britain by a businessman who treated him as his son and made him heir to his £2.5 million fortune should be allowed to stay, an immigration tribunal ruled. But the recommendation carries no legal force and the Home Secretary is free to send the boy back to Nepal.

NEW SECURITY measures have been introduced by the BBC to protect its computer system from hackers, following claims that political parties have obtained advance details of the running orders for news bulletins.

THE PRIVATE company which had been selected to run the London, Tilbury and Southend railway line has lost its franchise following allegations of ticket fraud.

THE managing director of an outdoor activities centre jailed for manslaughter after the Lyme Bay canoeing tragedy has been freed by the Court of Appeal.

ROGER OMOND, the Guardian journalist who charted his battle against cancer in moving accounts in this paper, has died at the age of 51.

Pay award to be phased in

Michael White

THE Cabinet last week infuriated public sector unions when it accepted an £884 million package of pay awards for teachers, doctors, judges and the military — but insisted that it be paid in two phases to meet Treasury fears of renewed inflation.

After a lengthy discussion in Cabinet, the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, emerged triumphant, with £150 million worth of the pay settlements due on April 1 held back until December. At an average of 4 per cent, they are above inflation, "a marked step-up" compared with last year, Whitehall proclaimed.

The Government's declared aim in phasing the award is to discourage a knock-on effect elsewhere in the public sector and in private industry, where pay settlements are hovering around 3.5 per cent, just above inflation. Both are set to rise, Tory rightwingers said privately, as Labour and the Liberal Democrats denounced "an obvious pre-election bribe".

While ministers stressed the "affordability" of the package, which is expected to be funded yet again by so-called efficiency savings, local authorities and union leaders predicted cuts in services and job losses. Nurses would quit the NHS in droves, union leaders predicted, after getting only a 2 per cent national award, to be topped up with local deals. And teaching unions predicted sackings and larger classes.

Whitehall believes such talk amounts to crying wolf. As for Tory MPs they crossed their fingers in the hope that Mr Clarke's timing will help boost the elusive "feel-good factor" closer to the likely general election in April or May 1997 when lower taxes, building society windfalls and even maturing Tessas are all supposed to put money in voters' pockets.

Within the average 4 per cent offered by the five pay review body reports accepted by the cabinet, nurses come off worse, but will not suffer two-stage phasing. Doctors and dentists will get between 3.8 and 6.8 per cent, teachers 3.75 per cent, the armed forces 3.7 to 4.3 per cent (3.9 to 5.6 per cent for higher ranks), and judges 3.9 per cent. But each group will have 1 per cent held back until December, at a cost this year of £735 million against £884 million in a full year.

● Ministers have announced a sweeping inquiry into the pay, pensions and allowances of MPs — the most comprehensive since the second world war — in response to the mass call by backbenchers for their salaries to be referred to the Nolan committee on standards in public life.

The Prime Minister's Office indicated the review, to be conducted by the Senior Salaries Review Body, chaired by Sir Michael Perry, is expected to be completed by June.

British Council offices axed

Ian Black

EIGHT British Council offices abroad are to close because of budget cuts, and more may have to go as managers ponder axing hundreds of British-based jobs and selling premises.

The eight offices — in Algeria, Yemen and unspecified countries in Africa and Latin America — are to go at once, it emerged last week. But up to 20 of the council's 109 overseas operations could close.

Up to 500 of the 1,300 jobs based in Britain are under threat. The council said that maintaining "front [illegible] commitment."

The council focuses on teaching English as well as arranging academic and cultural exchanges. Supporters say its work creates a British ambience that is of unquantifiable value for trade.

Its chairman, Sir Martin Jacomb, was given no good news when he met the Prime Minister to discuss the crisis last week. The council has to reduce spending by £21.5 million — 17 per cent — while the Foreign Office and Overseas Development Administration have lost only about 6 per cent of their budgets.

"We only have one realistic option for dealing with [the cut]: a major reduction in staffing," a council official said. "And if we can't function with reduced UK staff we then may have to close other posts abroad."

Candidates for immediate closure are offices in countries where there are security problems, little demand, or stiff competition, especially in Francophone regions. Expanding areas, such as the former Soviet Union and the fast-growing economies of Asia and the Pacific Rim, are to be spared.

The council is seen as the poor relation of the BBC World Service, also funded by the Foreign Office. "The World Service has this great image because everyone knows what they do," said one Whitehall insider. "The British Council doesn't have enough PR oomph."

Council staff are furious that the cuts have come despite their own recent sacrifices and the praise heaped on them at last year's Britain in the World conference.

Peter Daly, secretary of the council's trade union, said: "We relocated 650 jobs to Manchester in 1992. We've got rid of about 300 jobs by voluntary retirement. We feel we've done our bit to get a leaner and more modern organisation."

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Sinn Fein's leader in a double bind

Can Gerry Adams's credibility survive the Docklands bombing, asks **David Sharrock**

THE fog of uncertainty surrounding the future of Gerry Adams may take days to lift, as Downing Street and Dublin scour intelligence reports for evidence that there is still some point in talking to him.

The Sinn Fein president's role in the Northern Ireland peace process was absolutely central to its success — until the IRA bombed London's Docklands last Friday.

Government officials on both sides of the Irish Sea want to know: Did he know of the bombing in advance? If he did, his credibility as a man exclusively committed to peaceful methods is shattered; but if he didn't, has he now lost his position of influence within the IRA?

Whatever the answers, there can be no doubt that the announcement ending the ceasefire is a shattering blow to Gerry Adams and the peace strategy he has painstakingly constructed.

The Sinn Fein president refused to condemn what for all his new-found allies — constitutional Irish nationalism and corporate America — is the indefensible resort to murder and mass destruction, tactics of [redacted] **for confirmation that the ceasefire was about to end.**

It is more likely that he may have been aware that decisions had been taken in the light of the political situation, but not what their consequences would be or when they might take place.

The collapse of the ceasefire finally exposed the inherent weaknesses in the Sinn Fein president's strategy. Republicans were prepared to suspend judgment so long as there appeared to be real gains, but as the months dragged into years the contradictions began to emerge into painful clarity.

The surprise is that after 25 years of violence the leadership of the republican movement seemed prepared to settle for so little. The weakness may be that Mr Adams had not taken sufficient care to bring the rank and file with him.

But the unionists were not prepared to play by the rules of the "pan-nationalist front" and John Major was not in a strong enough position to coerce them to the table. In the end the republican movement's internal tensions proved too much.

There may be one tiny, bitter grain of consolation for the Sinn Fein president. Without the party, without the IRA, there can be no peace in Ireland or Britain and the two governments know that. Sooner or later, after possibly thousands more futile deaths, the talking will have to begin all over again.

Bad faith and British dishonesty

Gerry Adams

ON Friday night last week, the IRA ended its 18-month-long cessation. The announcement was greeted universally with disappointment and regret. At this time my thoughts are with the families of those killed and injured in the London explosion. I understand the pain they are going through. I speak from the personal experience of losing many relatives, friends and colleagues in 25 years of conflict. It may be difficult for some people to absorb this after what happened last week, but the reality is that the IRA was undefeated when 18 months ago it took a very courageous decision to create what was universally recognised to be the greatest opportunity since partition: to resolve the conflict and secure a lasting peace settlement. But the British government and the unionists erected one obstacle after another to frustrate every attempt to sit down around the negotiating table.

Inclusive negotiations, without preconditions or vetoes, is the key to advancing the peace process to a peace settlement. This was the commitment given by the two governments, publicly and repeatedly in the run-up to the IRA cessation. This was the context in which the IRA in August 1994 made their historic announcement. Since that time there has not been one word of real negotiations. Nor is there even the prospect of negotiations beginning.

For 18 months Sinn Fein and others have been standing at the negotiating table waiting for the British government and the unionists to sit [redacted] psychology of war; a mindset which demands victory over republicans rather than agreement and compromise. We have witnessed bad faith and dishonesty, new preconditions, stalling, negativity and provocation. British bad faith and dishonesty confounded those who believed that the British would approach the peace process positively; the bad faith and dishonesty was so barefaced that it surprised even those of us with a healthy cynicism about British intentions.



A newly painted graffito in west Belfast offers comment of sorts on the London blast PHOTO: CRISPIN RODWELL

We watched as Private Lee Clegg was released and then promoted, as David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionists, marched through the nationalist community in Garvaghy Road, as Irish prisoners were mistreated in English jails, as plastic bullets were fired at peaceful demonstrators, as RUC raids wrecked nationalist homes. We pointed out, with growing desperation, that there could be no negotiated peace without peace negotiations. That without peace [redacted] ments established the twin-track approach. The Irish Taoiseach, John Bruton, described it as the means to remove preconditions to all-party talks. But when Senator George Mitchell's international body issued its report, the British government dumped it, reneging again on its commitment to begin all-party talks.

When the IRA announced its complete cessation of military operations, it presented everyone, but particularly the two governments, with a unique and unprecedented opportunity.

Our goal was to deepen that hope, to nourish it and to build a new beginning for all of the Irish people, and to open a new chapter in the relationship between the Irish and British people. Regrettably that hope was dashed on the rock of John Major's self-interest and the need for unionist votes at Westminster.

One thing is clear: it is not possible to have peace in Ireland unless the British government is committed to that objective.

Clearly, the question now must be what happens next? In any con- [redacted] seeks a surrender of the other, or we somehow find a way to rebuild the peace process and work for and secure a negotiated peace settlement.

Sinn Fein has repeatedly pointed out, with others, that the peace process could not stand still. If it was not moving forward it was always in grave danger of moving back. That has now happened.

But despite the tragic breakdown of the IRA cessation, Sinn Fein's peace strategy remains as the main function of our party. Our efforts to build an effective peace process must be redoubled.

Peace in Ireland can only be achieved through honest dialogue and democratic negotiations based on equality. This is not a military problem. It is a political problem which was militarised by the British. It needs a political solution that can only be achieved by dialogue.

For Sinn Fein's part, we are firmly committed to democratic and peaceful means of resolving political issues and to the objective of an equitable and lasting agreement that can commend the consent and [redacted] Ireland.

Sinn Fein also remains committed to the total disarmament of all armed groups and to the removal, for ever, of all guns, republican, loyalist and British, from the political equation in Ireland. Sinn Fein's commitment to our peace strategy and to a lasting peace based on democratic negotiations remains absolute.

Gerry Adams is president of Sinn Fein

But why were we so astonished?

Arthur Aughey

THAT acute observer of human self-delusion, the Duc de La Rochefoucauld, believed that the "only thing that should astonish us is that we are still capable of astonishment". The general astonishment last week when the IRA announced the ending of its ceasefire and exploded a bomb in London tends to confirm La Rochefoucauld's maxim. Why were we all so astonished?

The astonishment did not lie in the shocking and appalling nature of the act itself. Astonishment is not a moral response and has nothing to do with the outrage almost everyone felt at the enormity of the IRA's action. Astonishment lay, firstly, in the apparent irrationality of the act. For those of us tutored in the way of democratic procedures and the civilities that such procedures demand, the act was irrational because it appeared so pointless and so utterly disproportionate to the present political difficulties in Northern Ireland. Astonishment also lay, however, in being confronted by our own self-delusions about the capacity of democratic procedures to attract those who have been committed to violence.

Sinn Fein never acknowledged the principles of democratic procedure. The Downing Street Declaration was unacceptable. The IRA would not accept the remit of Senator Mitchell's international body on decommissioning. Sinn Fein did not subscribe to the Mitchell report's six principles and would not sign up to the "Realities and Principles" report of the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation in Dublin. This suggests that the ideological end remains more important to Sinn Fein than the democratic means.

In other words, the peace process has one distinctive meaning for Sinn Fein and the IRA. *Process* means an engagement towards a pre-determined end. It is a working out of a law of historical inevitability based on the Irish people's right to self-determination. When the assertion of democratic procedures, such as the consent of the people of Northern Ireland, appears to conflict with that process then, for republicans, the process is in crisis, has run its present course. It is politics with a no-loss clause. For Sinn Fein, politics is war by other means.

Why, then, did the IRA return to its campaign now? There are three obvious circumstantial reasons. First, the moment of maximum disagreement between the British and Irish governments was selected as a way of trying to deflect blame on to John Major's shoulders. Second, bombing London was a transparent attempt to drive a wedge between the people of Great Britain and the people of Northern Ireland. Third, it was an emphatic and deadly way of saying no to elections.

However, there is a broader cultural explanation. The IRA is rooted in both self-pity and self-righteousness. It is the militant assertion of a sense of victimhood which involves cynical political calculation and ideological dogmatism. The culture of militant republicanism is subject to illusions — such as that it can engage in a little bit of violence and return to the peace process having achieved a renegotiation of the requirements for a ceasefire. In short, violence will deliver what argument cannot. It is the task of the British and Irish governments to disabuse them of that.

La Rochefoucauld noted that no "occurrences are so unfortunate that the shrewd cannot turn them to some advantage, nor so fortunate that the imprudent cannot turn them to their own disadvantage". Politicians must turn this outrage to the advantage of democratic society and ensure that the IRA's imprudent act goes unrewarded. The opportunity exists for the so-called "Irish peace process" (which we now know was a sham) to be transformed into the *people's* peace process. It is time for unionists to take the initiative and make it a process with which everyone can feel comfortable. This involves a refashioning of the process rather than its "intensification". Elections must take place.

The politics of the peace process has happened in London, Dublin, Washington and on the media. It is important now to involve and to engage the citizens of Northern Ireland. There is a workable deal to be had. The IRA's bomb must not frustrate its achievement.

Dr Arthur Aughey is senior politics lecturer at the University of Ulster at Jordanstown

One bomb must not stop the talks

BISMARCK once wisely observed that events are stronger than the plans of men. He might have had Northern Ireland in mind, for his words precisely describe the extremely difficult situation in which all parties now find themselves. Until last week, every protagonist in Northern Ireland politics was working more or less willingly within the same framework. Whether they liked it or not, they were consenting parts of a process that was leading towards all-party talks on the future of Ulster and of north-south relationships in Ireland. Some were pressing ahead faster and more impatiently than others. Some were enthusiastic about the prospect, while others were less so. Yet even the British government and the unionist parties, the objects of intense criticism from nationalist Ireland for their perceived caution, knew and approved of what was happening and of where things were heading.

Last week's bomb has thrown the plans of men into disarray. The question is no longer how to get to all-party talks but how to deal with the IRA's bombing of London's Docklands. The IRA's deliberate resort to violence has become an issue in itself. The British and Irish governments are in the difficult position of demanding that Sinn Fein disassociate itself from the very thing which its allies in the IRA have just done so deliberately, before any return to negotiations can take place. Irish nationalists, including the Dublin government and the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP), are in a difficult position because they have spent so much time over the past two years claiming that the republican movement has abandoned the armed struggle, when it is now obvious that it has not. Even the republicans are in a spot, since nobody now believes a word they say.

It is understandable that this should be a time of confusion. The bombing took most of the protagonists by surprise. The ceasefire had not just become a way of life, as it was in Northern Ireland, but a way of thinking. There was an assumption, throughout most of Ireland and in the United States, that Sinn Fein had decided to break their lances in order to come inside ... to discuss, let alone to begin, the decommissioning of weapons was widely seen as a hardline negotiating tactic rather than proof that they would return to murder if they did not get their way.

THE fact that the IRA has now renounced exclusively peaceful means is therefore deeply shocking to those who believed that the republican movement had made an historic compromise when the ceasefire was announced in 1994. The IRA have made a lot of political and church leaders look stupid and naive. But perhaps the real naivety is ever to have imagined that the republican movement, steeped in the heroism and martyrdom of the armed struggle as it is, would ever give up these means of achieving its aims. Those aims of a British withdrawal from Northern Ireland and the unification of Ireland remain unaltered.

The real question is whether the various protagonists have a mutual political interest in talking to one another. It is vital always to bear in mind that the peace process began because all sides — not just the IRA — wanted to bring an end to the terrorist war in the north. Republicans wanted to stop because they were war-weary, because there was no evidence that they were going to win a military victory, and because they believed that Britain was in the mood to make political concessions, partly because of the damage caused by the IRA's mainland bombing campaign. But Britain wanted to stop too, because it was expensive to maintain the counter-terrorist state in Northern Ireland, because the IRA showed no sign of giving up and because the continuance of the conflict was damaging Britain's international position, not least in the United States.

They were right to talk to one another, secretly at first and then more openly. They had both made the good political judgment that the war was a stalemate and that they might each be able to find a basis for a new settlement in the north, not least because nationalist Ireland, in the shapes of Albert Reynolds and the SDLP's John Hume, seemed so ready to bring the two sides together. But if that was a good political judgment then, when the IRA's armed struggle was in full flow, then how can it not sooner rather than later be a good political judgment again, even though the IRA has resumed bombing? The reasons which brought the peace process into being are just as valid. That seems to have been somewhat forgotten as the months of the ceasefire have trickled along, especially in Britain and especially in the Conservative party.

The bombing did not take place when everything was going well but when everything was going extremely badly. The peace process had lost almost all momentum and had become bogged down in a series of arguments about the terms upon which Sinn Fein could be permitted to join all-party talks. The British government and the Labour party thought that these terms were politically necessary first steps. To Sinn Fein they looked like a variety of ways of demanding that it should surrender. In the long and tedious argument about these terms, the main point of the peace process seemed to become increasingly remote.

The case for restarting the peace process is stronger than ever, because the bombing has reminded many people of what is at stake. It forces people to recall how hopeless and negative the old bombing campaigns had become. It compels people to put an active value on the peace that they are now faced with losing. Do we want to slip back into the world of bombings and assassinations, of emergency legislation, dirty tricks and political vacuum?

The case for talks is overwhelming. A peace still needs to be built, and Britain and Ireland have a common interest in pressing ahead to revive the peace process on the basis of the Mitchell report and according to a brisk timetable. The British and Irish prime ministers should meet as soon as possible to set the process in motion. The Americans, who have played a constructive role so far, should be involved at all stages. There should be no vetoes on participation. Only then will we know whether there is a real hope of workable compromise settlement in Northern Ireland or not. We cannot afford to pass up the chance of finding out.

Peres goes for an early vote

SHIMON PERES has cut the electoral knot in the simplest way possible. Everyone said that he would find it more difficult to push forward the peace process in the next few months ... flagging and the next phase of talks with Yasser Arafat — supposed to deal with "permanent status" — would also present mounting problems for an Israeli government preoccupied with its political future. So what to do? Mr Peres's answer is to reverse the running order of events: the Israeli elections will now come (in late May) at the earliest possible date and normal negotiating service can then be resumed on the increasingly likely assumption that Labour will be returned to power.

Advancing the date would not have been an option for Mr Peres if public opinion had not already shifted significantly in his direction. It is easy to explain this as a "sympathy vote" in the aftermath of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. Surveys at the end of last week gave Mr Peres 52-53 per cent against 35-36 per cent for the opposition leader, Binyamin Netanyahu. And the projected party seat breakdown would give Labour 48 per cent in the Knesset against 35 per cent for the newly combined strength of Likud and the far right Tsomet party. But though sympathy has played a part, the scale of this shift suggests that a more thoughtful process is at work. Mr Peres, broadening his inheritance from Mr Rabin, offers peace. As one commentator in the daily Maariv puts it, it is "Peace with far-reaching concessions. Peace with risks. But peace." It is not at all clear what Mr Netanyahu offers. He already had a severe problem in combating the belief that sections of the Likud party had tacitly condoned the extremism that led to Mr Rabin's assassination. He now says that he too will make peace while rejecting all of Mr Peres's concessions. A good proportion of the Israeli electorate clearly does not believe him. Significantly, most Likud Knesset members now accept the Oslo agreements as a fact of life, and there is pressure from the grassroots for further change.

Mr Peres is also assisted by the improving economy — itself partly a reflection of the more optimistic climate for peace. Unemployment has fallen to around 6 per cent from 10.2 per cent at the last election. The issue is more likely to hurt Likud, with concern that its return to power could damage the economy by upsetting the peace process.

There is still a risk for Mr Peres that his ratings may wane over the next three months, especially if there is a new outbreak of terrorism. Mr Arafat should be thinking of ways to help him: inescapably now they are linked together as partners for peace.

A bitter pill that offers scant relief

Martin Woollacott

THE linked crises of welfare and unemployment are worsening. They underlie the tensions in Europe over monetary union, and are already beginning to dominate the US election campaign. Everywhere in the developed world labour ministers are appealing for wage restraint, social services ministers are proposing welfare cuts, prime ministers are banging their heads. Even the United Nations is downsizing, a symbol of the times.

The British government's plans to cut the running costs of welfare are a perfect example of the way in which welfare and unemployment problems overlap. The very techniques of re-engineering which, applied in private industry, have swollen the dole queues, are to be applied to the welfare workers themselves, many of whom will no doubt soon join their former clients on the pavement outside the Job Centre. In Germany, the government, faced last week with the highest unemployment figures since the war, wants to cut pensions, health care, and unemployment pay. In the United States, state governors have proposed a compromise on welfare that may help Republicans and the White House resolve their quarrel over the budget. It is a compromise, however, that would erode entitlements to welfare payments.

... we have to swallow if things are to get any better. Yet the evidence suggests that, at best, this is only a temporary way out of our dilemmas. Discussion is made obscure by the persistent refusal to recognise that the economic processes which produced the employment and welfare crisis have human agents, whose decisions could have been, and could still now be, different ones. They are addled further by the persistent notion that money and jobs are saved by cutting welfare.

This argument is a strange one. First, it ignores the fact that welfare is one face of the complex of policies that produces social peace, or a simulacrum of it. The certain result of less welfare spending is higher spending, by the state and by individuals, on other forms of security, financial and physical. The agencies which spend may not be the same, but the spending goes on. You can satisfy your citizens, you can buy them off, or you can suppress them. Governments in practice do all three, in varying proportions. Switching between these strategies, or switching between public and private spending, doesn't greatly alter the financial problem, since all three strategies are costly and the form of spending is ultimately irrelevant.

Second, it suggests that transferring services from the public to the private realm represents a "saving". In fact, as the comparisons between British and US health spending have consistently shown, societies with largely private provision tend to spend more, because of duplication and profit taking. Third, it imagines that cuts in welfare costs to employers will enable them to compete with overseas producers whose labour costs are a fraction of those in Europe or North America. In fact, such reductions may gravely affect workers here, but have only a tiny effect on competitiveness.

The truth about reducing the welfare state, at least through the kind of reforms that we see proposed in many Western societies, is that *no money is necessarily saved.* This bears repetition. What happens, when welfare is reformed, is that the costs of social help and social control are financed and spent in a different way. In effect the systems for dealing with social trouble start to move away from being paid mainly by taxation, administered mainly by the state, and aimed primarily at caring rather than guarding and suppressing. But the systems do not thereby cease to exist, or to cost money.

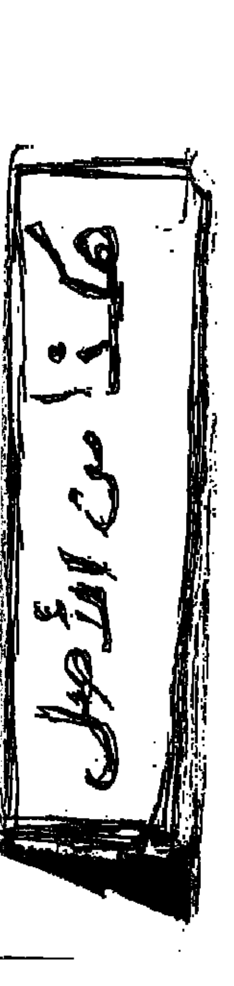
Harassed governments are interested in being able to offer a cure even if they know, inwardly, that it is not likely to work. They are also interested in displacing blame on to the public itself. Thus, rather suddenly, ordinary people are being accused of "not having made proper provision for their old age". Yesterday's dutiful taxpayer becomes today's shiftless ne'er-do-well.

More broadly, the Western public stands accused of schizophrenia. It wants social services, even says in polls that it will vote for higher taxes to pay for them. Yet when it comes to it, the vote goes in that other, low-tax, slot. But the ... such objectives. The ... economic history of the past 20 years needs to be looked at afresh to identify the relatively small and relatively purposeful groups that have created the difficult economy we inhabit.

AMERICAN writers such as Michael Lind have argued, essentially, that a new class has seized control. In thousands of usually obscure *coups d'état* in businesses across the West, a new kind of more ruthless manager has displaced somewhat more generous and socially conscious predecessors. Such managers are assisted by able but morally neutral technocrats, skilled at bringing in the software and at organising the contracting out that leads to higher profits and smaller workforces. To these two groups can be added the politicians who respond to business pressures for lower company taxes, lower taxes on high incomes, and welfare cuts.

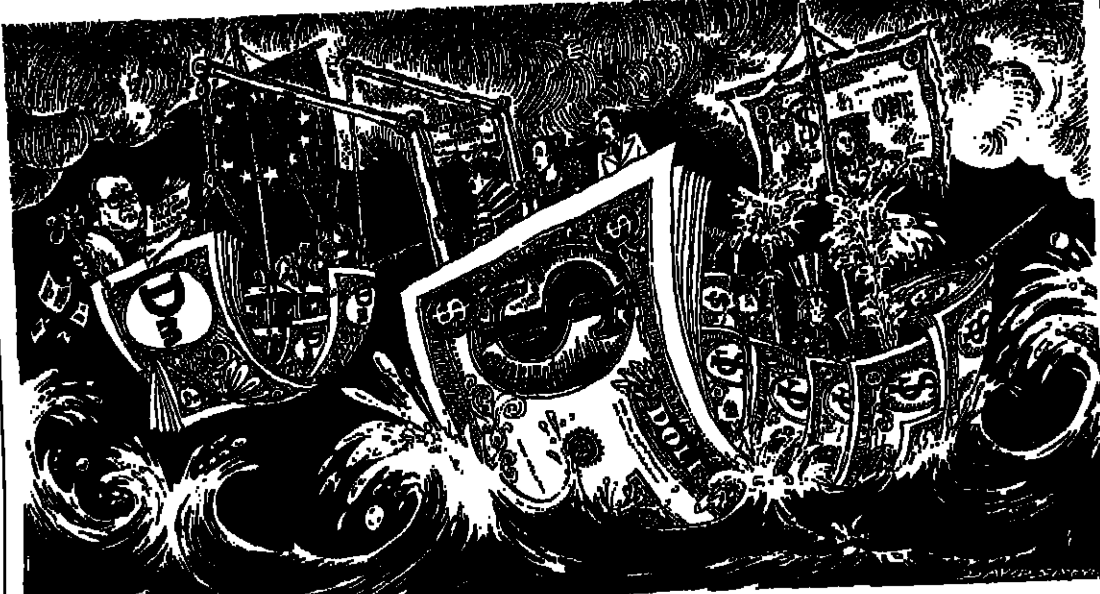
Lind's "overclass" theory, while specific to his American case, has the virtue of recognising that these critical processes are about power and interest, taking us away from the notion that economic change is like climatic change, something with no assignable human causes, and something that can perhaps be mitigated but never opposed.

Reforming welfare is one thing, but cutting it as a cure for economic problems is a chimera. What would help most would be to abandon the idea that a welfare rollback is essential to tackling the jobs crisis. What is essential is to confront the forces in our societies which have deepened social inequalities, stripped out millions of jobs, and now propose to act as if the resulting mess was everybody's problem but their own.



Britain passes the Euro buck

Europe either sticks together or falls apart, argues **Will Hutton.** But will Britain's Conservatives listen?



CHANCELLOR Helmut Kohl may overstate his case, but in essence the German leader is right. Europe has never managed to organise itself into a stable system of nation states in the past, and it is unlikely to do so in the future.

If the process of European integration is stalled, the Continent is unlikely to lapse into war in the lurid way he described in his Louvain speech at the beginning of this month, but things could become pretty tense all the same.

Left to itself, the present European apparatus probably has a better-than-evens chance of rubbing along roughly as it is today. Europe's political institutions and the single market would remain, and the great post-war achievements would gradually become more entrenched even as they were reformed and modified. There need be no grand schemes for monetary or political union.

But Europe does not operate by itself; it is part of a global system whose malfunctions directly impinge on the Europeans — and which is the prime source of European destabilisation.

Britain's Conservative and Labour leaders alike would clearly love to believe in the jogging-along-as-we-are option, obviating the need for hard choices and relieving the British of continual German pressure for more [illegible] and some on the left, does not lie in a return to the European state system; Britain, as one of the weakest European economies, would be the loser.

The clearest example is money. If there was a stable international financial system with a solid anchor currency, Europe's states could happily organise themselves as a subset of the wider system. Europe could create a zone of comparative currency stability so the single market was not wracked by competitive devaluations, either by operating a fixed but flexible exchange rate system or an even more flexible system of economic co-ordination around common inflation targets. The rationale for the single currency would fall away.

But there is no stable international financial system, and no solid anchor currency. The world currency is the depreciating and volatile dollar, and the system is the anarchy of floating exchange rates.

Thus Europe is trying to construct a zone of currency stability in a world system that is unstable — and with its own leading currency, the mark, rising structurally against the dollar and its fellow European currencies. So what, you may ask. Why cannot Europe's currencies just float up and down as the market takes them — as MPs Peter Shore on the left and Nicholas Budgen on [illegible], as a result of the devaluation of the peseta and lira. The situation is likely to unwind soon.

The one reliable fact in the foreign exchange markets is overshoot, as traders rely on the "trend being their friend" to buy the appreciating currency and sell the depreciating one. Both the yen and the mark are overvalued on any criteria, but the overshoot could stay for years before there is an automatic correction.

In other words, the Germans (and the French) are facing further adjustment on top of the high unemployment from which they are already suffering. Both countries have announced job packages, but they are limited in their action by budget constraints — in part because of their commitment to the Maastricht criteria for monetary union and in part because the Maastricht criteria perversely have become the all-powerful financial markets' benchmark for what constitutes "sound" policy. The conundrum becomes more acute; domestic reflation is vetoed, unemployment mounts and the loss of jobs to the Mediterranean littoral grows more acute.

The best response is to Europeanise the problem so that the entire European economy shoulders the weight of international diversification out of dollars — and the Euro can emerge as a new world currency. [illegible] tricht criteria if the Euro is going to be a hard currency, but the weight of dollar liquidity moving into Euros will be perfectly sufficient to ensure it remains hard, given a modicum of sensible economic management. It will not be so hard as the mark, but as Germany cannot live with a currency that strong it is a pointless comparison.

Why should other European countries give up their autonomy to help Germany, and to a lesser extent France? The answer is if the problem cannot be Europeanised, then Germany will start to look for bilateral solutions. It might form a currency bloc with its satellites and insist that single market privileges are available only to its members; it could attempt to do a bilateral deal with France on the same basis.

Britain will look for allies to balance the rising power network; balance-of-power politics will be back with a vengeance — but this time, Conservative analysts please note, Britain will be playing the game without an empire or a robust US ally. German GDP is nearly twice Britain's, and over the low-growth 1990s the gap has widened, with German GDP growing on average 1.5 per cent a year against Britain's 1.1 per cent. Weak players enter this game at their own risk.

The right approach, as Barry Eichengreen, James Tobin and Charles Wyplosz argued in the Economic Journal early last year, is [illegible] mechanism as the platform for a single currency, and so allow more time for convergence.

To make this feasible, European states need to establish a turnover tax on foreign exchange activity along with taxes on bank lending by non-residents in order to curb speculative activity — that will permit each state more autonomy to generate economic growth while laying the foundations for a single currency.

Yet even that requires a degree of co-operation between Britain, France and Germany that the British reaction to Chancellor Kohl's speech seems to forbid. Offering nothing constructive, Britain is creating a world in which it will be the loser. Such is the price of refusing to confront our myths.

Express in merger with TV group

Lisa Buckingham

THE Express newspapers empire, headed by Tory peer Lord Stevens, caused a frenzy of takeover speculation in the media world last week by announcing a £3 billion merger with MAI, the television and money broking group led by Labour's multi-millionaire "Red Baron", Lord Hollick.

The merger will create one of the biggest media combines in Britain and one of the top 20 press and broadcasting groups in the world. It comes after months of speculation that Lord Stevens's United News and Media group was a takeover target.

The deal, which sent some media shares rocketing, has altered the strategic outlook for major media players and fuelled belief that a series of acquisitions will follow.

Carlton Communications, one of the big three players in ITV, was rumoured to be ready to try to scupper the merger by launching its own bid for United News or MAI. The company, which owns Carlton and Central, has been regarded as a potential predator for both United and MAI.

However, shareholders in MAI and United sold large tranches of stock on Monday, apparently in a bet that Carlton Communications would not make a move.

Shares in smaller ITV players, such as Yorkshire Tyne Tees, Scottish TV and HTV, rose as City dealers hoped other broadcast companies would [illegible] Bill and mount takeovers before the summer when the legislation is expected to reach the statute book. Yorkshire Tyne Tees shares rose by 53p to 900p, MAI by 69p to 448 and United News by 28p to 652p.

When the Government published the Broadcasting Bill in December, it set new ownership rules permitting newspaper groups to control ITV companies for the first time. It replaced the two-licence limit with a 15 per cent ownership cap on the total television audience.

Lords Hollick and Stevens dismissed talk that an outside bidder would disrupt their merger, which will create a company with interests in the Anglia and Meridian television stations, Channel 5, the Express newspapers, regional newspapers including the Yorkshire Post, and in business services such as the opinion research organisation, NOP.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates February 12	Sterling rates February 5
Australia	2.0270-2.0311	2.0285-2.0326
Austria	15.83-15.86	15.80-15.83
Belgium	46.30-46.41	46.20-46.30
Canada	2.0997-2.1027	2.1125-2.1165
Denmark	8.70-8.72	8.69-8.71
France	7.74-7.75	7.73-7.76
Germany	2.2527-2.2558	2.2491-2.2522
Hong Kong	11.82-11.83	11.86-11.87
Ireland	0.9712-0.9738	0.9680-0.9705
Italy	2.404-2.408	2.407-2.411
Japan	163.17-163.44	161.05-161.32
Netherlands	2.5224-2.5256	2.5188-2.5221
New Zealand	2.2711-2.2736	2.2618-2.2644
Norway	9.83-9.84	9.83-9.84
Portugal	233.76-234.09	233.80-234.12
Spain	189.61-189.90	189.92-190.20
Sweden	10.62-10.64	10.63-10.65
Switzerland	1.8383-1.8411	1.8329-1.8357
USA	1.5304-1.5314	1.5346-1.5356
ECU	1.2269-1.2281	1.2272-1.2284

FTSE100 Share Index down 20.0 at 3725.6. FTSE 250 Index up 15.8 at 4152.2. Gold down $0.95 at $406.25.

Europe's gnawing dilemma over jobs

Guardian Reporters

LAST WEEK, unemployment in Germany topped four million, while in France it is already more than three million. As dole queues lengthen cross the European Union, the search is on for ways of creating jobs.

European Commission president Jacques Santer is calling a crisis summit of governments, employers and trade unions in May to agree action. The choice of Lille in northern France to host the Group of Seven leading industrialised countries' forum on unemployment in April looks particularly apposite.

In Brussels there is a growing perception that the success or failure in bringing down unemployment over the next two years could help decide whether monetary union starts in 1999, as planned.

The Commission is now considering the unthinkable — switching its budget priorities from agriculture to employment-sensitive programmes such as the trans-European infrastructure networks and industrial research. Last year EU farm spending came in under budget by around £1.8 billion, an underspend expected to grow over the next three years.

The trouble is that money cannot be easily switched between different EU budget spending lines without the approval of national governments. Traditionally, member states insist that spare cash is handed back to them. This time even UK Treasury ministers may find it hard to resist the switching of EU funds to fight unemployment.

Germany's labour market problems are increasingly acute, with the social costs of employment meeting increasing criticism. The government's annual economic report complained that wage-earners were lucky to take home half their gross pay.

In Sweden, the government is considering restrictions on overtime to force companies to take on staff. The proposals, which would halve the amount of overtime in private industry, come amid growing calls from trade unions and opposition parties for a shorter working week in a drive to promote job-sharing.

Despite an export boom that has brought soaring profits for many leading corporations, unemployment is close to 13 per cent and rising.

In France, efforts at a joint approach are already under pressure. The government has accused employers of pocketing job-creation incentives without taking on new staff.

President Jacques Chirac alienated employers by blaming them for the 11.7 per cent unemployment rate. But the National Council of French Employers claims prime minister Alain Juppé is not doing enough to make it cheaper to employ people.

A French worker earning the statutory minimum monthly salary of FF6,250 ($1,240) costs his or her employer FF8,700 ($1,720). A spokesman for the national council said: "We are looking at an average of 50 per cent in peripheral charges, paid by the employer. The real problem is not, as is often stated, the high cost of the French welfare system. What cripples employers are local taxes and contributions to family grants which we do not think should be the responsibility of employers."

Karadzic Stages Show of Defiance

John Pomfret in Banja Luka

BOSNIAN SERB leader Radovan Karadzic has emerged from behind the scenes for the first time since the Dayton peace accord, staging a show of authority and scoffing at his indictment by the International War Crimes Tribunal.

Karadzic mounted his political reentry at Banja Luka, the major Serb-held city 90 miles northwest of Sarajevo, in his first visit here since a string of Bosnian Serb military defeats in October that set the stage for the peace agreement the following month. Opposition officials and Rajko Kasagic, another high-ranking Bosnian Serb leader, noted that the appearance — which dominated the nightly news and included a live television appearance, "Ask the President" — had all the trappings of a kickoff to an election campaign.

It was, they said, a clear sign that the Montenegro-born, nationalistic Serb leader has decided to fight attempts to sideline him mounted by President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia, his former patron, and by an increasingly strong Serb opposition within Bosnia itself.

A political comeback by Karadzic could deal a severe setback to the U.S.-led NATO peacekeeping operation in Bosnia. In addition to being an indicted war criminal, Karadzic opposed the Dayton accord and, in particular, has sought to block the mandated return of Serb-populated suburbs of Sarajevo to the Muslim-led Bosnian government's control.

Karadzic's visit was carried out under the noses of NATO troops. On Thursday last week, Karadzic's motorcade sped through at least four checkpoints manned by Italian, American, Russian and then American soldiers. In Banja Luka, during his appearance last Friday, a British NATO vehicle was parked nearby. No attempts were made to detain him.

Karadzic said the war crimes tribunal in The Hague was "ridiculous . . . It is shameful what they are doing. They are accusing the political and military leadership without a shred of evidence."

In an interview, Karadzic said he would not go to the tribunal willingly. "It is not a court or a tribunal," he said. "It is a form of lynching for the whole nation. Why should I do that?"

Karadzic also insisted his political position in Serb-held Bosnia is rock-solid despite reports that his popularity has faded since the peace agreement was put together last November. He specifically did not rule out participating in nationwide elections planned for later this year, brushing aside provisions in the accord that ban any indicted war criminal from taking part.

"I am stronger than Deng Xiaoping," the former psychiatrist said, referring to China's aging leader who rules the world's biggest country from behind the scenes. Indeed, Karadzic announced a new law that would allow Serb refugees to keep houses they have taken over in the region.

Bosnian Serb sources said Karadzic's attempt to reemerge in Serb politics after months of seclusion was bolstered by the Muslim-led government's recent arrests of Serb soldiers and officers suspected of war crimes. The arrests, which led Bosnian Serb authorities to cut off contacts with the NATO peace force, also discredited moderate Bosnian Serbs who were pushing for a conciliatory line, they explained.

"There are some people in our party who were trying to bring us closer to the Muslim-Croat Federation before this happened," Kasagic, who is [illegible] ment, said. "This experience has showed us that the 'Brotherhood and Unity' line is dead."

His view was echoed by Dragutin Ilic, the leader of the strongest opposition party in Bosnian Serb-held territory, the Serbian Socialist Party of the Serb Republic, which has backed better ties with Muslims and Croats. "These arrests will only help the extremists on all sides of Bosnia," he said.

Muslim police have captured Bosnian Serb Gen. Djordje Djukic and Col. Aleksa Krsmanovic along with other, lower-ranking soldiers over recent weeks and are holding some of them on suspicion of war crimes. The arrests have triggered bringing peace to Bosnia after more than three years of war.

Richard Goldstone, chief prosecutor of the war crimes tribunal, has said that there is justification to keep the two officers in custody. But other Western officials have privately voiced opposition to the arrests, saying that while technically permissible under the accord, they came at an inopportune time and undermined hope for improved ties between Muslims and Serbs.

But Karadzic denied the claims of Gen. Ratko Mladic, the top Serb military officer, that the Serbs would break relations with NATO. And Kasagic later predicted that Serb contacts with NATO and Carl Bildt, the top Western diplomat in Bosnia, would resume.

If carried out as indicated by Karadzic and Kasagic, the resumption of contacts would not only defuse the crisis but also amount to a repudiation of Mladic, who ordered his forces to boycott both the Sarajevo government and NATO.

Karadzic's foray into northern Bosnia was seen as a bold move. He has had little backing in this area, which has turned increasingly toward the Serbian Socialist Party. The main source of Karadzic's power traditionally has been Serb neighborhoods of Sarajevo, where he lived before the war.

In Banja Luka, Karadzic attended an important conference of his Serbian Democratic Party, the organization that led Bosnia into war in April 1992. At the meeting, he handily suppressed a challenge to his authority launched by Predrag Radic, the popular mayor of Banja Luka who, although a member of Karadzic's party, has been highly critical of his chief.

The challenge concerned who would assume Kasagic's seat on the municipal council of Banja Luka. It became vacant late last year when he was appointed prime minister of the Bosnian Serb self-[illegible]

"We don't have any more [illegible] enemies from among Croats and Muslims," Karadzic said, referring to the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of them from Serb-held ground. "The new enemies are people with left-wing ideas that are alien to the Serbian people."

Serbian President Milosevic has backed the Serbian Socialist Party here, providing it with money and daily media coverage from Belgrade-based TV.

Time to Do the Business on Beijing

OPINION
Jim Hoagland

WAR BETWEEN China and Taiwan is unthinkable today. It makes no sense. It is as unthinkable as an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was in July 1990, as unthinkable as Britain having to expel the Argentines from the Falklands seemed in 1982.

That of course is the point: The Clinton administration must now think the unthinkable. It must move with an energy and determination it has not previously shown to prevent a war that could surprise the world by happening.

Every rational, calculated scenario shows that Beijing is simply bluffing with its increasingly belligerent behavior. The experts assure us this bellicosity is designed to scare Taiwan's government and influence the island's March presidential election.

Miscalculation and hubris can sweep away those rational scenarios in the blink of an eye. In this decade, few governments have shown as great a propensity to miscalculate and misunderstand each other as Beijing and Washington. This is not made easier by the crisis atmosphere China has manufactured to intimidate Taiwan and bully the Clinton administration into yet more concessions on trade, human rights and technology sales.

The Clinton administration now confronts the consequences of clinging to a failed China policy it feels it cannot afford to abandon. The same bureaucratic reflex that kept secret arms shipments flowing to Iran's "moderates" under Ronald Reagan and guaranteed agricultural credits to Saddam Hussein to make him more reasonable now drives Bill Clinton's policy toward China's communist gerontocracy.

Clinton's "comprehensive engagement" policy has not given the rational reformers that Washington presumes to be lurking in the government enough ammunition to enable them to prevail and moderate Chinese behavior. China scholar Orville Schell puts it succinctly: "The truth is that China is not playing to solve problems but to win" in a long-term confrontation with the West.

The U.S. concessions — Clinton's reversal on granting low-tariff trading status to China, the waffling on visas for Taiwan officials, looking the other way on the export of nuclear technology to Pakistan, the high visibility meetings Clinton has held with Chinese leaders — have not purchased moderation. Time is running out as Beijing escalates its aggressive behavior and buys Russian warplanes.

The administration's approach has convinced Beijing that everything else in the relationship — human rights, Hong Kong's future, even regional security — comes second to economic relations and trade. That may not be true. The point is that Beijing now believes it and acts upon it for its own advantage.

Clinton needs now to remove the leverage he has given the Chinese. He should de-emphasize the importance of China to America's economic future. He should order them to drop the policy's phony argument that a strong trade relationship is America's best chance to moderate Chinese political behavior and bring democracy to China.

It may be beyond America's power to stop China from miscalculating where the brink lies. But it is within America's power to dispel the current ambiguity about the U.S. commitment to Taiwan and U.S. political values. That is the best way to prevent the unthinkable from becoming reality.

From Guns to Doves

EDITORIAL

INSTEAD of a 21-gun salute, Haitians released 21 doves to mark the first peaceful democratic passage of power in their country's nearly 200 years. It was a tribute to the outgoing president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Elected overwhelmingly, ousted by coup and reseated by US troops, the populist ex-priest abolished the repressive army, virtually ended human rights violations, mostly kept his promise to promote reconciliation, ran ragged but fair elections and, though he had the popular support to ignore it, honored his pledge to step down at the end of his term. A formidable record.

His successor is his follower and political "twin," 53-year-old agronomist René Préval. On him falls the onerous morning-after mission of consolidating the initial political deliverance and law and order, and stirring economic revival. Haiti's poverty provides one obstacle, its institutional weaknesses another, its uncertain hospitality to foreign aid and investment a third. President Préval must find a way between his people's raised expectations and the depressing realities. He must do so under the watchful eye of the still-lionized and still-ambitious Aristide, who has retired to private life but apparently intends to run again in 2001.

President Clinton took strong steps to hand Haiti back to its leader and its people. This was the right thing to do. The administration followed by providing as much help as it could. Mr. Clinton has a large investment in Haiti. Were it not for his far larger and riskier investment in Bosnia, where he has sent American troops for a year, he might have kept American troops on stabilizing duty in Haiti beyond the similarly promised year there. As it is, the work of stabilization may now be performed by some of the other United Nations peacekeepers, but not for long.

The real test will come when Haiti must move forward without US intervention — with aid but essentially on its own. If the effort flags, then another wave of Haitians may take to the seas and head for Florida. This would be a cruel second "election."

Clinton Says HIV Law Unconstitutional

Ann Devroy

PRESIDENT CLINTON said he believes legislation requiring the discharge of members of the military with the AIDS virus is unconstitutional. Last week he ordered the Justice Department not to defend the provision in court.

The Clinton order was part of a three-pronged effort by the administration to protect slightly more than 1,000 servicemen and women affected by a provision of the $245 billion defense authorization bill. Clinton also ordered that full military disability benefits be provided to anyone discharged under the provision, and he vowed to work with Congress to repeal the law.

The provision requires that members of the military who test positive for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, be discharged within six months regardless of their ability to perform their jobs. After a person is infected with HIV, it takes an average of 10 years to develop AIDS.

Clinton believes the provision is "completely abhorrent and offensive," White House Counsel Jack Quinn said. Until the law is ruled unconstitutional or court action blocks its implementation, however, the law will be enforced, he said.

"If the Congress chooses to defend this treatment of men and women in the military, it may do so; but this administration will not," Quinn said.

He said a legal test of the provision was "as sure as the sun will come up tomorrow," and predicted the courts would overturn it.

The provision, sponsored by Rep. Bob Dornan, R-California, a conservative Republican presidential aspirant, was attached to the defense bill that the president signed at the weekend. Because the legislation includes a military pay raise and dozens of other key provisions, White House officials said, it is too important to the national defense to veto as several civil rights and gay rights groups asked.

The White House opposed the provision when it emerged in Congress, but Clinton never threatened to veto the overall bill because of it. Many in the administration thought it would be killed in a House-Senate conference and never become law.

Clinton last week endorsed legislation sponsored by Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Massachusetts, and Sen. William Cohen, R-Maine, to repeal the provision. To give that legislation a boost, the White House and basketball star Earvin "Magic" Johnson released a letter that Johnson sent to House Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Georgia, and Senate Majority Leader Robert J. Dole, R-Kansas, asking that the provision be repealed.

Johnson, who quit basketball after he was diagnosed as HIV-positive and then returned to the courts earlier this month, asked their support for repeal for the military "who, like me just want to do their jobs and provide for their families."

Rep. Steve Gunderson, R-Wisconsin, who is gay, said he believes at least some of the Republican leadership in the House will support repeal of the provision. He said the provision was not thwarted earlier because AIDS activists and others believed they had a commitment in the Senate that it would be killed — an expectation that was not fulfilled.

Quinn said no one would lose their job "until the last possible moment." He and others said they hope that Congress repeals the law before then, or that a court challenge is filed that prompts a judicial order to stop implementing the law until its constitutionality is tested.

The Clinton actions drew strong praise from civil and gay rights groups. "This was a momentous step toward fairness," said Kim Mills, spokeswoman for the Human Rights Campaign, a gay and lesbian political organization.

Matt Coles, director of the American Civil Liberties Union AIDS project, said Clinton should have vetoed the legislation but that he took the next best step.

Clinton believes that the provision is both 'abhorrent and offensive'

Dornan has said it is unfair to let HIV-positive service members remain in the military, because they are not eligible for combat or certain other duties, so other personnel must do such work.

In deciding to keep the Justice Department from performing its routine job of defending a federal law, Clinton took an unusual but not unprecedented step.

Several presidents have done the same, with the most famous case being a decision by Franklin Roosevelt to sign a defense spending bill during World War II despite a provision he believed was unconstitutional.

The provision — which called for blocking the pay of several individual federal officials whom Congress viewed as radical and irresponsible — was not defended in court by Roosevelt and was eventually ruled unconstitutional.

The Clinton administration relied on a Justice Department ruling that the HIV law would only be constitutional if it "serves a legitimate government purpose," according to Assistant Attorney General Walter Dellinger.

Defense Secretary William J. Perry and Gen. John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said to discharge HIV-infected service members who are deemed fit to perform their duties would be "unwarranted and unwise" and serves no military purpose. That conclusion, Dellinger said, lends to the conclusion that no government purpose is served by the provision.

Madonna Stirs Controversy Over Evita

Gabriel Escobar in Buenos Aires

MORE than 40 years after her death, Evita Peron still [illegible] bane of the rich, Evita today is almost a more formidable historical figure than her husband, Juan Peron, whose rise to political power during the 1940s took place with the onetime actress at his side.

Enter Madonna. Evita's life is now the subject of a $55 million film, based on the famous musical and starring the pop singer in the title role. Now that director Alan Parker has arrived with his cast to begin shooting Evita, the cult that surrounds the "flag bearer of the poor" is again consuming Argentines. The result has been an appropriately boisterous, rude and, at times, even threatening welcome for Madonna, whose life in many ways parallels that of her character.

Like Evita, Madonna is adored and despised. Like Evita, Madonna has confronted church and state and often come out on top, at least as far as her followers are concerned. And, most like Evita, Madonna is a talented woman who has thrived even though she has not always been careful about who she offends.

During the past fortnight, one bishop here proved that a benediction could be a slap in the face when he said he would not be averse to blessing Madonna because, after all, Christ himself had not turned his back on the prostitute.

A Peronist congresswoman threatened to introduce a bill declaring Parker, Madonna and her co-stars, Antonio Banderas (playing Che Guevara) and Jonathan Pryce (playing Juan Peron), *personae non gratae*.

Other threats made against Madonna and an Argentine actor chosen to play a minor role have again exposed Argentine extremists as well as the country's periodic aversion to free expression. The threats have resulted in heightened security, although one law enforcement official said the concern is more over the possibility of an egg being thrown at Madonna, or some other form of public insult, than a physical assault.


Madonna: received threats from Argentine extremists

At a news conference given by Parker and the stars last week, Madonna sidestepped political mines set by Argentine journalists and responded with brief answers.

All this has provided fodder for endless discussions on the national character. Madonna, said philosopher Enrique Mari, is a "detonator" who exposes the intolerant side of Argentine society — one that has been muted by 12 years of democracy but that still lurks in the background.

Its membership, now much diminished, includes Evita fanatics who see Madonna's casting as the desecration of a martyr. They are members of the same fringe that once prevented a stage production of Jesus Christ Superstar by blowing up the theater, a tactic that has been used several times to deter [illegible]

"These types no longer have power, but they have left their seeds planted," said Mari. "It seems to me that they have taken advantage of this Madonna affair to try to gain a political space they cannot obtain any other way."

While these predictably Argentine dramas play themselves out, Madonna has quietly gone about her business, always in costume. To the astonishment of some (and the obvious disappointment of others), the erotic Madonna of numerous videos is nowhere to be seen. Instead, a remarkably Evita-like Madonna has flitted in and out of public view, always soberly dressed and always seemingly in character.

"When she walked in, she already had the look of Evita. I was impressed. There is something about her that is fragile, like Evita, and at the same time strong, like Evita," said Sara Facio, a noted Argentine photographer who attended a private meeting two weeks ago between the pop star and a group of septuagenarian Peronists who had worked closely with Evita.

The people in the room were so tense with expectation, Facio recalled, that someone said, "This moment is almost historic," right as Madonna walked in.

At that meeting, Facio said, Madonna asked questions for three hours, trying to get a clearer picture of what Evita was like. Did she eat chocolates? Did she drink whiskey? Coffee? Tea? Did she change dresses often? Did she and Juan Peron exchange glances in public?

Girls Are Not 'Fair Game'

OPINION
Ellen Goodman

YOU COULD say that politics makes strange bedfellows, but bedfellows is probably not the best [illegible] sex, teen-age pregnancy, welfare — a trio of issues that have morphed into public enemy number one. An enemy with a face that is young and female.

In the past, politicians outdid each other in their praise of motherhood. Today they outdo each other in laments about teen-age motherhood. From the feminist left to the religious right, they have found common ground worrying and sermonizing over girls who become mothers before they become women. Now at last, the same disparate collection of policy-makers are turning their attention to the partners in this terrible tango: adult men.

In California, which has the highest rate of teen-age pregnancy in the country, Pete Wilson, a governor who tacks from right to center with impressive sailing skills, has issued a warning to adult men who impregnate underage girls. In his state of the state address last month, he said: "I have this message: That's not just wrong, not just a shame. It's a crime, a crime called statutory rape."

In fact, it's a crime called "unlawful sex with a minor" in the gender-neutral terminology of the penal code. But Wilson has allotted $150,000 to each of 16 counties to go after men who go after girls. It's an idea whose time has come back. And not just in California.

The renewed interest in statutory rape laws comes out of startling research showing that the babies of teen-age moms don't necessarily have teen-age dads. Half the babies born to mothers between 15 and 17 had fathers who were over 20.

The younger the girl, the greater the age difference. In Washington state the average age of men who impregnated girls between 12 and 17 was 24 years old. And two-thirds of the girls had been sexually abused in their lives.

You do the math. President Clinton's brand new National Campaign to Reduce Teen Pregnancy wants to cut teen pregnancy by a third by 2005. Half the impregnators are adult men. Any rational discussion of this issue has to include these men.

[illegible] one of Wilson's goals is, surely, to collect child support money by threatening imprisonment. But the other goal is to post a protective sign — "Off Limits" — around young and vulnerable girls. This is where the support for dusting off these laws is growing — out of a renewed concern about exploitation and abuse, sexual pressure and predators.

In early America, the age of consent for a girl was 10. Then in the 19th century, a movement made up of feminists and moralists and reformers of many stripes raised the age as high as 18 or 20 for the explicit purpose of protecting young females and their "virtues" from men and their "vices."

But a generation ago, in the wake of the sexual revolution and the women's movement, the social pendulum swung from protecting females to liberating them.

Most of the laws were put into mothballs. As a result, Michelle Oberman of DePaul University says, "Modern criminal law has turned girls from 'jail bait' to 'fair game'."

Now, in many ways, we are concerned again that we have abandoned the responsibility to children. In the real world, "liberation" left girls more vulnerable, and the reform did little to right the power imbalance of age and gender.

I'm not in favor of these laws if they are used to prosecute the 18-year-old boyfriends of 17-year-old girls. Every 17-year-old girl is not a victim. Nor is every 18-year-old boy a predator. The law can never be a substitute for that best contraceptive: a future.

But this is one way for society to draw a line. This is one way for society to right the power imbalance. It's time to say again that adolescent girls are not "fair game."

Suzanne Moore, page 24

Is It the Death of Venice?

Daniel Williams in Venice

THIS FADED city, arguably the world's most beautiful urban relic, is in shock from the fire that destroyed La Fenice opera house, a gilded gem that dated from the 18th century.

Recently, Venetians have trooped silently to view the skeletal remains of the theater. Charred beams and railings lie in a jumble behind the surviving neoclassical façade. Mostly, the passersby stand around silently. Sometimes, there is a murmured "Poor little thing," or "How is it possible?"

They grieve not only for the loss of a building, an entertainment center, a storehouse of culture and memories. They hurt also from the realization that decay in Venice is so advanced — that the city of palaces and gondolas may already be dead, only no one wants to admit it.

Years of talk about protecting the city from the relentless sea with colossal dikes, of bringing new life to commerce by attracting high-technology business, of reforming real-estate ownership to open mummified buildings to middle-income renters, has all been empty. In 50 years, the population has shrunk from 250,000 to 60,000 and is losing another 1,000 to 2,000 yearly.

Venice has been left out of the explosive prosperity of the Veneto region just across the bay, where high-tech industry and energetic trade have made it Italy's fastest-growing area.

By comparison, Venice's conscious orientation to the past, an attraction for tourists, has never seemed more pathetic: A fire in the center of town could not be doused because nearby canals had been drained for dredging; the theater was just undergoing renovation to make it safe from fires.

Venetians, and perhaps most Italians, were accustomed to the city's glorious backwardness — at least until La Fenice burned late last month and they were forced to ponder whether Venice's chronic illnesses are terminal. Venice, famed as a city of masks, had one of its own violently ripped away.

"What was horrifying was being woken up from sleep, from the dream of being surrounded by beauty," said Giuseppe Caliandro, a restaurant owner. "Venice's slow destruction somehow was not perceived, maybe was even thought to be part of its beauty. In a flash, with La Fenice, we were faced with our own mortality."

"Our only hope now is that the theater be rebuilt. We need this sign," said sculptor Marco Le Greco, whose gallery stands across from the gutted building.

Indeed, reconstruction of La Fenice has been made a test of whether a pulse beats in Venice. Mayor Massimo Cacciari pledged to rebuild the structure in two years — exactly the way it looked when it opened in 1792, all carved wood, gold and red velvet. "It will be rebuilt where it was and as it was," he said, in words that have already become celebrated throughout Italy.

"If we do not build La Fenice quickly, starting right away, it certainly will be a signal that this city has no future," said Vice Mayor Gianfranco Bettin. "The fact that Venice burned and people suffered showed it is alive."

The government has already pledged $15 million to redo La Fenice; the estimated total cost is about $25 million. Newspapers are collecting money from readers, television stations from their viewers. Venetians are canvassing private industry, and the city's glassblowers have pledged to build a new central chandelier for free.

Italy's record of restoring its old opera houses is a mixed one. A bombed-out La Scala was rebuilt in only two years after World War II. In Bari, by way of contrast, the Petruzelli Theater is still undergoing rebuilding begun in 1991. It was burned down by order of organized-crime bosses under murky circumstances: Either they were unhappy with their take of renovation contracts handed out by the city or wanted a cut of insurance money, according to reports. In Palermo, the Teatro Massimo has been closed for renovations for 25 years, due to unfulfilled contracts let to Mafia-connected builders.

It is perhaps hard for Americans, whose nation predates La Fenice by only a few years, to realize how tightly woven into the fabric of a city an opera house can be.

The theater was the product of a prideful whim of the city fathers. Venice, which then stood at the head of a wealthy republic that stretched inland into Italy, already suffered from a slow economic decline brought about by altered trade routes.


Water works . . . Venice's beauty has not been able to stem the city's shrinking population
PHOTOGRAPH: STEWART KENDALL

The Portuguese end-run around Africa three centuries before undermined Venice's place as maritime gateway to the East. The discovery of America provided fertile new trade territory across the Atlantic Ocean that had nothing to do with Adriatic Sea traffic.

Rumblings of the French Revolution alarmed kingdoms throughout Europe, and in Venice's case, the self-satisfied rule by oligarchical nobility. Still, if the 1,000-year-old Venetian Republic was not what it was, it could still be grand: La Fenice was designed to be a symbol of an immortal Venice, a phoenix perpetually rising out of the ashes.

Only six years later, Napoleon's troops conquered the inland republic and its island capital. The last act of Venice's demoralized leadership was to organize an opera at La Fenice to entertain the French interlopers. The theater burned down in 1836, but was rebuilt in a year.

Venice later came into Austrian hands and then became part of the unified Italian Republic during the 19th century. Yet the city's grandeur made it a kind of European capital. Donizetti and Verdi operas debuted at La Fenice (Verdi's "La Traviata" was badly received, to the everlasting embarrassment of Venetians). Famed conductors made a habit of performing there; the new opera season was to open in March with Mozart's "Don Giovanni."

"La Fenice was one place where Venetians went more than tourists," said Davide Samueli, owner of an art store near the theater. "We Venetians are accustomed to walk among buildings and know they are forever. Now, we are shaken."

The First Lady Knows Best

Douglas J. Besharov

IT TAKES A VILLAGE
And Other Lessons Children Teach Us
By Hillary Rodham Clinton
Simon & Schuster. 318pp. $20

THIS IS a marvelously conceived book, seamlessly interweaving warmly revealing anecdotes about Hillary Rodham Clinton and her family, folksy advice to parents, the findings of dozens of research studies, and a seemingly endless enumeration of her priorities for children (and, one assumes, [illegible] development) and that we need to do a much better job of applying that knowledge.

Mrs. Clinton intends nothing less than that we collectively improve the way the nation raises its children. People who know her only from the political coverage she receives will be surprised at the portrait of a busy professional woman struggling to be an involved mother — she comes out for "quantity time," not just "quality time" — and to preserve the essentials of family life. Even in the White House, she says, "Bill, Chelsea, and I try to sit down to at least one meal a day together, usually dinner."

And readers will be surprised at her strong — and repeated — emphasis on personal responsibility and the obligations of parents to take better care of their children. Perhaps it is her "devout" Methodist upbringing, which she describes in [illegible] her first instincts are quite conservative: no sex before age 21, tougher divorce laws, dress codes for public schools, quicker terminations of parental rights in child-abuse cases, and mandatory work for welfare recipients.

But the primary message of the book is found in its title, It Takes A Village [to raise a child], which Mrs. Clinton says she chose because "children will thrive only if their families thrive and if the whole of society cares enough to provide for them." In the last decade, this African proverb has become a cliché in child-development circles. Experts use it to mean that parents cannot do it all on their own, that they need support in raising children — and that children benefit from many non-parental influences, including the extended family, other adults, and community institutions.

Mrs. Clinton has something more [illegible] includes the federal government and its social programs. And in this book she finds room to describe and endorse dozens of them.

This idea of a national village is quite a stretch (although it finds echoes as far back as Beatrice Webb's writings on Fabian socialism and as recently as Mario Cuomo's "We Are Family" speech to the 1984 Democratic Convention), and it will surely be the most controversial aspect of the book. Many people, after all, blame the federal government for the breakdown of the neighborhood and the family.

Unfortunately, the book is unlikely to advance Mrs. Clinton's ambitious cause. The contemporaneous release of Whitewater and Travelgate documents has muffled the moral clarity of her message. But even sympathetic readers will find this book crammed with too much information for easy reading.

Mrs. Clinton has advice for parents on everything from how to avoid permissive parenting (she comes out for "authoritative" rather than "authoritarian" styles) to bedtime stories for children (she cites "Goodnight Moon" and Bible stories), how to choose a child care center (avoid one that gives jigsaw puzzles and crayons to infants, but they are O.K. for toddlers) and the proper size of meat portions at dinner (no larger than a "deck of cards"). It's amazing how many pointers she squeezes in, although she gets a few wrong (many experts fear that getting a child to eat by pretending the spoon is an airplane can escalate into a greater power struggle). Most parents (and children) would benefit from her advice. The only question is whether there is too much of it.

In seeming to have an opinion on just about every element of childrearing, she runs the risk of being considered a national nanny — especially when she seems to endorse having family and friends "consistently and firmly [remind] an expectant mother to forgo an alcoholic drink or a cigarette." Her interminable list may turn off readers.

A far greater weakness is her tendency to exaggerate the effectiveness of specific programs, which undercuts the force of her policy prescriptions. At the same time, her palpable impatience with those who disagree with her and her failure to address their objections with reasoned arguments will probably offend many readers.

Moreover, many of the programs she wholeheartedly endorses have documented shortcomings, well-known in the academic community. In one particularly egregious case, Mrs. Clinton describes how, by age 3, the Abecedarian preschool project in Chapel Hill, N.C., raised IQs by 17 points compared to the control group's. She goes on to say, "Even more significant than these impressive gains is their durability: the differences in IQ persisted a decade later." If only that were true. As the children got older, the gap between the experimental and control groups narrowed to 7.6 IQ points at age 5 and to a statistically insignificant 4.6 points at age 15.

ACCORDING to the White House, Mrs. Clinton's manuscript was vetted by many people, including the president and senior members of her staff (on their own time). That such mistakes remained is a meta- phor for why so many of the policies proposed by her in the administration's first two years fared so poorly. In the months to come, some reviewers (and not just her political enemies) will surely — and justifiably — focus on them as reasons for ignoring her policy prescriptions.

Nevertheless, I came away from this book liking Hillary Rodham Clinton. Even as I was frustrated by her failure to subject her policy beliefs to critical examination, I was taken by her earnestly expressed concern for children and commitment to her own family. How can one parent not like another who pens the following line? "As the mother of a teenager, I felt very [illegible] fifteen-year[illegible] spend ten days with [illegible] even if it was on a trip through South Asia."

Maybe Mrs. Clinton is too much of a village person for her own good, and maybe the president and the Democratic Party would be better off if she took a tougher look at her favorite social programs. But there is no denying her basic point: Children need a good start in life, and too many aren't getting one.

A Stubborn Minority That Refuses to Go Away

Michael Collins Dunn

A MODERN HISTORY OF THE KURDS
By David McDowall
I.B. Tauris. 451pp. $35

THE END OF the Cold War saw the emergence of an independent Armenia, and now there is a Palestinian National Authority as well. Thus two of the Middle Eastern peoples who found themselves excluded from statehood in the settlement after World War I are enjoying some degree of self-determination. But one large Middle Eastern ethnic group with aspirations towards statehood — the Kurds — still finds itself denied.

The Kurdish issue never really goes away. In Turkey the Kurdish insurgency continues to undermine the stability of the Turkish state, which in response has turned much of eastern Turkey into an occupied zone. In northern Iraq, Iraqi Kurds enjoy the greatest autonomy they have ever been able to achieve (under the protection of the West), but the two major Kurdish factions fight fiercely against one other. Though less active recently, Iran's Kurds continue to be a thorn in the side of the Tehran regime. The Kurds represent substantial minorities in Iraq, Turkey and Iran; there are smaller minorities in Syria and Armenia, and a Kurdish diaspora has spread throughout much of the Arab world and into Western Europe.

The nature of the Kurdish question is such that almost no statement one makes goes unchallenged. How many Kurds are there altogether? (Twenty-five million? Many more?) What percentage of the population do they represent in each country? (The Turkish number is a particularly sensitive question with the Turks.) It is clear enough that the Kurds are a major people, but they are divided themselves. They are divided by religion (there are Sunni and Shii Kurds, Kurds who follow the Yazidi and other minor sects, and the Sunni Kurds are divided between two major Sufi brotherhoods), by tribal allegiance, by dialects of Kurdish, and, of course, by the boundaries of modern nation states. These divisions have made it difficult for the various Kurdish movements in Middle Eastern countries to unite forces: On the contrary, their opponents have often been able to pit one Kurdish faction against another in classic divide-and-rule strategy.

Reference works dealing with the Kurds have suffered from the same divisions. They are usually written by specialists on the politics of Turkey, Iraq or Iran, and deal competently with the Kurdish movements in each country, without depicting the broader Kurdish forest. Some have been scholarly investigations of a single movement or incident. For general references dealing with the Kurds as a whole, there has been little indeed, especially in English. One of the exceptions to the lack of general works was a solid, if brief, work, The Kurds, written by David McDowall.

NOW, McDowall has published a substantial Modern History Of The Kurds. It is competent and comprehensive and fills a much-felt need. While thoroughly researched and footnoted, it is written as a readable narrative history, not a scholarly treatise for specialists.

McDowall deals with the three major Kurdish struggles — in Turkey, Iraq and Iran — in detail and in historical context. This should become the standard history of these Kurdish movements in English. McDowall deals briefly with earlier Kurdish history and the continuities of Kurdish society and political organization, before beginning his detailed narrative in the middle of the last century, when the Kurds were divided between the Ottoman Empire and Qajar Iran, but not yet so fragmented among nation states as today. He carries his narrative, which deals with each of the major Kurdish movements but never loses sight of a broader, pan-Kurdish perspective, down to the post-Gulf War period.

McDowall does not hide his sympathies for the Kurds. This is not a book to please the authorities in Ankara, Baghdad and Tehran. But neither is it merely a polemic in support of Kurdish nationalism. In his concluding chapter, "Retrospect and Prospect," McDowall notes that while Kurdish nationalism may have made little progress towards an independent pan-Kurdish state, by the 1990s it had undermined the Kemalist ideology of Turkey and the Arab nationalism of Baathist Iraq. He sees the opportunities as brightest (ironically) in Turkey, despite the intensity of the state's opposition to Kurdish separatists. Pressures from Europe for democratization, and concern that the creation of a Kurdish diaspora in western Turkey may be more destabilizing than providing more autonomy to the Kurds in eastern Turkey, combine to make compromise more likely.

McDowall blames the continuing influence of tribally organized traditional society for many of the problems the Kurds have faced in building a real national movement. Certainly the Kurds' own internal divisions have been much exploited by their enemies, and his own historical narrative displays the consequences vividly.

One need not agree with McDowall on every point of interpretation to recognize that this book provides the best single narrative history of the Kurds and their movements in one place in the English language. It supplements and in some cases may replace more specialized works on individual Kurdish movements; it certainly belongs on the shelf of anyone interested in the Middle East today, or in the future of Turkey, Iraq and Iran — and of course the Kurds.

Egyptian MPs try to rein in Islamists

Alexandre Buccianti in Cairo

THE Islamic fundamentalists do not give up easily. One of their leading figures in Egypt, the former member of parliament Sheikh Yussef al-Badri, intends to challenge the legality of a new law, introduced last week, aimed at protecting people against "intellectual terrorism". The law places restrictions on plaintiffs who take out legal proceedings in the name of the *hizba*.

Based on the notion that it is the duty of every Muslim "to prescribe what is fitting and forbid what is reprehensible", the *hizba* authorises any individual to go to court in defence of the Muslim community.

That has been the principle invoked by a syndicate of Islamist lawyers led by Al-Badri when suing intellectuals whom they accuse of having "struck a blow at Islam".

They notched up their biggest success when they brought an action against Professor Nasr Abu Zeid for "apostasy", so as to invalidate his marriage to his Muslim wife (no Muslim woman can be married to an apostate). The appeal court ruled in the syndicate's favour and ordered the couple to separate.

The final ruling on the case, now before the supreme court of appeal, is expected on [illegible] meantime, fearing the ire of Muslim extremists (who have already murdered the anti-fundamentalist writer Farag Foda), the professor and his wife have moved to the Netherlands.

Al-Badri recently announced that he was also going to take out proceedings, on the same grounds, against 40 intellectuals, including the novelist Naguib Mahfouz, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Denouncing what he described as "a threat against thought and liberties in general", Mahfouz had already called on parliament to pass legislation that would outlaw such practices. The new law, rushed through parliament on January 29 as a result of a personal intervention by President Hosni Mubarak, stipulates that private individuals are no longer entitled to take their cases directly to court on the basis of the *hizba* when personal status is involved.

Plaintiffs must now channel their cases through the state prosecutor's office, the only body authorised either to dismiss the case or bring it to court. In the event of dispute, the plaintiff's only recourse is to refer the matter to the attorney general, whose decision is final. Although he has reservations about the new law, Ali Fathel Bab, the only Islamist member of parliament, has given it cautious backing because, he says, "it legalises the *sharia* [Islamic law]".

Several liberal intellectuals have criticised the law because it recognises the principle of the *hizba*, which had fallen out of use since the abrogation of *sharia* courts in 1955.

Mohammad Said al-Ashmawi, for example, argues that parliament should simply have banned all lawsuits based on the *hizba*, which is cited not only in cases of personal status but also in criminal courts.

That is something the film-maker Youssef Chahine discovered to his cost: although he initially won his case when accused of "striking a blow at Islam" with his film The Immigrant, the matter is now before the appeal court. Other films, and indeed some actors, are the subject of court actions on the same grounds.

(February 3)

Booked . . . One of 32 Islamists arrives at Cairo court last week, charged with murdering 10 men in an anti-government campaign

Miners in Ukraine fight for a better life

Natalie Nougayrède in Donetsk

RUSSIAN miners suspended their strike on February 3, but their Ukrainian colleagues are pursuing their industrial action, which began on February 1. Trade union sources say 400,000 miners are still out.

The Kiev government refuses to negotiate with the strikers on the grounds that it has to conform with instructions from the International Monetary Fund as regards its monetary policy. Some 30 mines in the Donets Basin (Donbas) in eastern Ukraine are threatened with closure as part of a restructuring plan proposed by the IMF.

When miners in the Donbas get together to discuss their strike, they do so beneath a portrait of Lenin and the slogan: "Coal is the bread of industry." When they demonstrate, they do so in Donetsk's Lenin Square, in front of a statue of Lenin.

The Donbas is in the grips of a "proletarian protest movement". Locals still call each other *tovarish*, not out of habit but out of conviction, and because, as a toothless old miner explained, "the class struggle has got going again".

The Donbas miners are on strike because salaries (about $100 a [illegible] paid for five months.

As one furious trade unionist said at a meeting: "In what civilised country do miners go to work on an empty stomach?" All those who had crammed into the hall nodded in agreement. It will not be long before the tins of tomatoes and sauerkraut, dried fish, gherkins and pots of jam made by miners' wives last summer will start running out.

Another trade unionist, Vassily Khara, railed against the Ukrainian government: "We'll bring them to their knees! It'll be like 1989." He was alluding to the massive strikes by Soviet miners that proved fatal to Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika. The hall resounded to enthusiastic whistles. But, as the meeting broke up, someone muttered: "It's we who are on our knees."

Behind Donetsk's largest slag heap and rows of huts with plumes of smoke from coal stoves rising from their chimneys is the Petrovskoe mine, one of the largest in this huge coalfield. It was built a century ago, as can be seen from the dilapidated state of its surrounding walls, its insalubrious showers, and the sinister entrance to the pit, which is lit by a solitary, low-wattage lightbulb.

The miners often look 10 or 15 years older than they are. They stand slightly stooped in their greasy boiler suits. Their voices are throaty and their teeth in a sorry state.

They work 600m below ground, hacking away at the coal face in galleries only 1m high, sometimes without emergency oxygen reserves. Their mouths and lungs are clogged with coal dust. The mine has no drinking water or properly equipped dispensary. The canteen offers a meagre menu of cabbage, potatoes and the occasional meatball in premises that even the energetic *babushkas'* mops cannot make presentable.

In 1939, Petrovskoe's "Stakhanovite" miners broke productivity records in honour of Alexei Stakhanov, who came from the Donbas. Today the trucks and picks lie idle, and the only zealots are the strike committee members, who spend their time engaged in debate or in games of chess.

Anatoly Gerevich, who has spent 15 of his 40 years at the pit, curses the market economy: "Take any businessman. The sausage he sells belongs to us. His shop belongs to us. But the suitcase stuffed with cash belongs to him."

"We used to live in a rich and well-respected country. Now we're citizens of a banana republic!" say the strikers. They regret the passing of the USSR, which they say made them who they are — one man is half-Russian and half-Tatar, the next half-Lithuanian and half-Cossack, and so on.

Ukrainian independence has brought them nothing but trouble. The one exception is that "at least our sons weren't sent to Chechenia."

The miners are convinced that their Russian counterparts have "an easier life" because they get paid three times more, and because their government listens to [illegible]

Valery Sipalo, who lives in a dark and dank two-room flat, says he certainly needs his salary but also demands "self-respect". After 30 years at the coal face, he had a heart attack. Despite that, he went back to work at the mine, like many pensioners: he could not make ends meet with his disability benefit, "worth the equivalent of 15 lemons at market".

"At the hospital I saw private boutiques selling very expensive medicines on the ground floor, while sick miners were dying on the floor above because they weren't getting treatment," he says.

In 1995, accidents resulted in the death of 339 miners in Ukraine, a death rate four times higher than in Russia, and 100 times higher than in the United States. According to trade union sources, one Ukrainian miner dies for every 250,000 tonnes of coal produced.

Thousands of young miners in the Donbas have already left the mining industry in disgust. Sasha, a 24-year-old former miner, regularly travels to Moscow to buy Russian translations of US pulp fiction books and sell them back in Donetsk. Many of his friends work on building sites in Russia. The mafia likes to import cheap but well-qualified Ukrainian labour. "They build the dachas of the Russian *nouveaux riches*," Sasha says.

Vladimir has become a taxi driver. He waits for customers in front of the Miner Hotel, not far from the stadium that is the home ground of the local football team, the prestigious Shakhtjor [Miner] Donetsk. He has adorned his dashboard with an old 100-rouble note bearing a portrait of Lenin and, next to it, a photo of an American pin-up girl — "because one has to try to look on the bright side of things".

(February 8)

Life's no ball for the 'rugger widows'

Michèle Aulagnon

IN SOUTHWEST France, where the preferred sport is rugby rather than football, players' wives are known as "rugger widows". This is because they are expected to make considerable sacrifices for their husbands. Rugby is a game that requires players to devote a great deal of their time to training sessions and matches, as well as what is known as "the third half" — post-match jollification in the clubhouse or a restaurant.

Anne Saouter, a researcher at the Centre of Anthropology in Toulouse, wanted to find out exactly what role women played in rugby. It is "a purely male game — at least that is what most rugby players claim", she notes in an article in a special issue of the review Terrain, Carnets du Patrimoine Ethnologique, devoted to sport. She concludes that women are tolerated in the world of rugby players only if they conform to one or other of two archetypes: the mother or the whore.

"Rugby is a man's sport, which does not involve women, and especially not during the 'third half'," writes Saouter, who decided not to include women's rugby in her survey. When trying to justify the exclusion of their wives, players say things like: "They always cause trouble" or "They might ruin everything."

However, women do have a special role to play in rugby, and that is in the stadium, where they are not only admitted but welcomed. But they are allowed only on the terraces.

Mothers are allowed to let off steam. It is quite common to hear them hurling insults at the referee, and there have been legendary scenes of women jabbing the points of their umbrellas at players who have been nasty to their "lads".

Mothers continue to look after their sons even when they have got married. "Almost all players told me they still gave their togs to their mothers to wash," says Saouter.

The most characteristic manifestation of the wives' "widowhood" is the "third half". During this usually very boozy meal, the players relive the game, indulge in a good deal of ribaldry.

Wives are rarely allowed to join in such revelries. The only female presence which is tolerated is that of groupies. They get scant respect from the the players, who sometimes nickname them "doorbells" (you only need to ring at their door for them to open up) or "Aids-traps".

(February 6)

Post-embargo Skopje makes a fresh start

Florence Hartmann in Skopje

THE Uranja restaurant near Skopje's main sports stadium has become a favourite haunt of Macedonia's jet set. In a setting whose atmosphere blends perfectly with the tennis courts next door, stylish waiters wearing stamped-velvet waistcoats are poised to rush up with a mobile telephone at the slightest sign from one of the diners — mostly business people negotiating important deals.

On that particular day, the president of the Macedonian Chamber of Commerce and his colleagues were having drinks with their Croat opposite numbers to celebrate the successful resumption of trade between their two once-federated republics.

At the next table, the boss of a biscuit factory was having lunch with his Serbian competitor — and future partner. There was no need for interpreters, as everyone was using the common language of the defunct Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: Serbo-Croat.

Four years after becoming independent, Macedonia, a small republic of 2 million inhabitants hemmed in by Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Albania, is now trying to emerge from its isolation by rebuilding the ties that were shattered by the conflict in the Balkans.

Macedonia escaped the theatre of war, but was crippled by a double embargo that turned it virtually into a besieged city over a period of several years. To the north, its border with trade blockade cut off Macedonia's main supply route via the port of Thessaloniki.

The only breaches in the stranglehold were via Bulgaria, which is linked to Macedonia by a dilapidated road and rail network, or via Albania, which was used only as an emergency solution.

Since the autumn of 1995, Macedonia seems to have succeeded in getting things moving again. Its transition to a market economy and its programme of economic stabilisation have begun to bear fruit.

And its many attempts at reconciliation with Greece, which had previously fallen on deaf ears, finally resulted in September in the beginning of a normalisation of relations between Athens and Skopje.

Then, on October 15, Greece decided to lift the embargo that had been throttling the Macedonian economy for more than a year and a half in exchange for two concessions: that the "contentious" clause in the Macedonian constitution — whereby Macedonia kept a close eye on "the situation and rights of citizens of Macedonian origin in neighbouring countries" — should be struck out, and that Macedonia should agree to change its national flag from a yellow sun with 16 rays against a red background (the symbol of Philip II and Alexander the Great) to one with eight rays.

The thorny question of the name Macedonia itself, which the Greeks regard as an integral part of their historical and cultural heritage, was also the subject of negotiations.

The signing of the Dayton accords in November resulted in the lifting of trade sanctions against Belgrade. Those sanctions, given that almost 50 per cent of Macedonia's trade used to be with Serbia and Montenegro, had resulted in an estimated loss of more than $4 billion, which was only partially offset by the blossoming of a contraband economy.

Western diplomats in Skopje feel there are now grounds for optimism after a period of considerable uncer- should see a reversal of trends in 1996. The stabilisation programme carried out by the government has made it possible to curb inflation, to begin restructuring the economy and to lay the foundations for a recovery."

The state-run stores, stark and poorly stocked during the first few years of independence, have been turned into private shops jam-packed with imported goods, which most Macedonians cannot afford because their average salary is only $200 a month.

It is true that economic reforms have made it possible to steady the national currency, the denar (whose value has been pegged to the Deutschmark for the past 18 months), and to bring the annual inflation rate down from 2,250 per- last year.

Spice of life . . . A market seller in the Albanian quarter of the Macedonian capital, Skopje PHOTOGRAPH: MELANIE FRIEND

But the social cost has been high. GDP per inhabitant is $800, or half what it was in 1989, and industrial output has fallen by 50 per cent over the same period. And on top of Macedonia's 200,000 jobless (30 per cent of the population of working age) there are 200,000 pensioners (10 per cent of the total population).

"There is no turning back. We have to continue the reforms," says Macedonia's young prime minister, Branko Crvenkovski. Looking at the economic figures for 1995, a year when Macedonia was still smarting under its double embargo, government sources expect to see a 2.6 per cent increase in output in 1996 and a rise in GDP of between 2 and 4 per cent.

The privatisation programme launched in 1993 is now in its final has been effected by staff or management buyouts. It is a system that the government regards as the quickest method of privatisation, but it does not inject the capital required for business to grow.

There has been sharp criticism in the press of the unfair way in which state-owned enterprises have been turned into joint-stock companies in a poor country like Macedonia, where a handful of people, through a simple paper transaction, can become owners of large companies overnight without having shelled out a penny.

"I'm worried we may see a clique in power gradually taking control of the economy, and personal fortunes being amassed amidst a sea of poverty," says Vladimir Milcin, president of the Soros Foundation in Skopje. "I cannot agree with the government when it declares that all the dangers confronting Macedonia have been averted."

Recovery will depend to a large extent on the government's skill at restructuring the economy, stabilising the banking system and the public sector, and privatising farming co-operatives, which should be set in motion during 1996. The last will not pose much of a problem, since 82 per cent of land was already privately owned before independence.

The country will also need foreign capital. For that to be forthcoming, a stable political situation will have to be restored in the region.

UP TO now, foreign investors have not been particularly keen to move into Macedonia, and the number of joint ventures can be counted on the fingers of one hand. The reopening of the north-south road connection should make things easier for a country that now conducts 70 per cent of its trade with the European Union and Slovenia (as compared with 35 per cent before independence).

But it will take time for Macedonia's exports to become more competitive, particularly as its "natural" trading partners are holding back — above all Greece, because of political considerations, but also Serbia and Montenegro, for economic reasons.

Although the new rump Yugoslavia is prepared to recognise Macedonia and wants to sign an economic co-operation agreement with it as soon as possible, Belgrade has been hard hit by sanctions and the war effort and can offer only a very limited market in the short term.

But whatever the future holds, Macedonia fully intends to take advantage of its geopolitical location, which served it so badly during its first years of independence.

Macedonia is a crossroads of prime importance in southeast Europe, and an inevitable transit point between the Black Sea and the Adriatic, and between the Aegean and the Danube. "For all those reasons," says a US diplomat in Skopje, "it has every chance of becoming an economic platform. However, it's not its market of 2 million inhabitants that will interest foreign capital, but its strategic position in the region."

(February 4/5)

Afghan warlord vows to battle on against 'foreign' foes

Bruno Philip meets Ahmed Shah Massoud in his stronghold, Jabel Saraj

THE HERO of the resistance against the Red Army and the military leader in the Afghan capital, Kabul, since the fall of the communist regime, Ahmed Shah Massoud, clearly feels that nothing much has changed since the Soviet troops left. "I'm 100 per cent certain that my war is a just war," he says. "It's exactly the same situation as when the Soviets were here: the Afghans are rising up against foreign interference."

His forces may be in power in Kabul and in a handful of provinces, but the Islamic fundamentalist militias known as the Taliban still occupy the area around the capital, with, Massoud claims, the military and political support of neighbouring Pakistan.

He argues that the Taliban are a creation of Pakistan's interior minister, Naseerullah Babar, and its military secret service. The Taliban first made their mysterious appearance in the war a year ago, taking control of the Pathan provinces in the south, with hardly a shot being fired, and neutralising the traditional parties spawned by the anti-Soviet resistance. But Kabul held out, and Massoud's troops succeeded in pushing the Taliban back into the hills surrounding the capital.

Massoud directs operations from his stronghold in Jabel Saraj, an hour's drive from Kabul. His office is in the military barracks, which are overlooked by the snowcapped peaks of the Hindu Kush.

His face has scarcely aged, even though he has been fighting for 15 years. He still has the same warm smile when evading a question, the same intense eyes, the same superior tone when stating what he regards as the truth.

"The Taliban are preparing to launch a new offensive against Kabul," he says. At the same time, he believes his enemies "have come round to the idea that they can't gain much more by waging war, because they haven't succeeded in winning the trust of people in the provinces".

The whole country is now against the Taliban, according to Massoud. This has given him a chance to cobble together deals with several of his former enemies. He has signed a truce with Rashid Dostam, head of the Uzbek militia who calls the tune in the north of the country and with whose forces he has clashed in Kabul over a number of months. "We are both standing our ground on the Salang Pass, and the road has been reopened to civilian traffic," Massoud says.

As for his inveterate foe Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the now weakened leader of the extreme fundamentalist faction, Hizbe Islami, he says, "I'm still negotiating and waiting to see how our discussions will turn out".

There can be no doubt that once Hekmatyar had been driven out of his stronghold south of Kabul by the Taliban almost a year ago it was in his "objective interest", as Massoud puts it, to make peace.

Massoud has also signed a "ceasefire agreement" with Karim Khalili, the leader of the Shi'ites in the Hizbe Wahdat party. "But the problem of the Taliban remains," he says with a sigh. "We have sent them emissaries through the good offices of a neutral party, and we're awaiting the outcome."

Afghanistan's recent history is littered with alliances, U-turns, betrayals and renewed alliances between the rivals who, for a time, rose up as one against the Red Army.

The Taliban tried to make out that they would bring a swift end to the chaotic situation in the country by taking up arms against all those fighters who were obstinately prolonging a war that had become secular instead of "holy".

They failed, which is why Massoud hopes to shock the nation into pulling itself together. He says the war "has been imposed on my country by foreign powers". This is a reference to Pakistan, Uzbekistan and other neighbouring states.

But for the time being, Massoud continues to be isolated, since his ally, President Burhanuddin Rabbani, controls only part of the country and because the Kabul army seems unable to eliminate the Taliban.

"Our strategy has always been to defend Kabul first," Massoud says. "But if the political negotiations fail, we shall take the necessary decisions . . . The dependence of the Taliban on Pakistan is even worse than that of the former Afghan communist party on the Soviet Union."

(February 6)





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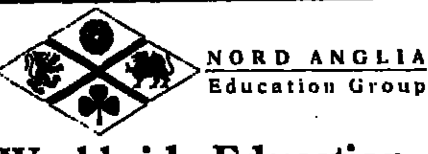
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Builder of bridges

Derek Worlock

MORE than 50 years dedicated to the Roman Catholic church made Archbishop Derek Worlock of Liverpool, who has died of cancer aged 76, one of the best known and most highly respected churchmen of post-war years: he became a Companion of Honour at the New Year, having been confined to the Lourdes Hospital in Liverpool since July.

Worlock took seriously the new emphasis on friendliness and good relations with other Christian churches after the Second Vatican Council. He also gave a strong lead in drawing attention to the social problems of his dioceses. The major theme of his work was renewal, in church and in society, and he always struggled to serve those whose real and ordinary lives could be touched by the Gospel.

Though he could seem austere and reserved he was a compassionate, caring man who warmed to those willing (as he was) to try to go that extra mile for what they believed in. He was a perfectionist who put greater store in helping people find long-term comprehensive solutions to problems than in pandering to passing needs — though this did not blind him to the smaller daily problems people endured. He was a gifted and effective broadcaster.

Born in the St John's Wood area of London, Worlock was one of three children. He lost his older brother in the second world war along with many of his contemporaries and school friends. His baptism, he said, had been in haste — along with his sister, Patricia — because of doubts about his health and the likelihood of his survival. Both parents were converts from the Church of England at the time of their marriage and would have guarded carefully the Catholic upbringing of their children. But they brought other influences to bear — politics, journalism and public speaking. His father was a local Tory agent and his mother keenly supported women's suffrage, selling newspapers outside Parliament, and speaking at many gatherings in those pioneering days for women's rights.

Church was important to the family. Worlock senior had gone up to Oxford hoping to train for the ministry, but instead took to journalism.

Life in a small Hampshire village was scarcely the most hopeful seedbed for such a vocation. The Worlocks were the only Catholics there and had to travel five miles to the nearest Catholic church. Only when he was 13 and could persuade his parents to allow him to attend seminary, did he begin a Catholic education. He entered St Edmund's College, Ware, in 1933 for the long years of preparation leading to ordination in Westminster Cathedral in 1944. He became a curate in Kensington, just as the V1 bombardment of London was at its height.

Life in Kensington soon gave place to appointment as personal private secretary to the Archbishop of Westminster, then Cardinal Griffin. The assistance he gave to the cardinal, who had ordained him, turned into a relationship of deep friendship and respect.

Given the title monsignor at 29, one of the youngest so appointed, he gradually took on much of the work which the ailing Cardinal Griffin could not do in person. When Pope John XXIII called his unexpected ecumenical council in 1962, Worlock was an obvious and constant companion to the English bishops, for whom he acted as secretary. In 19 years he was secretary to three successive cardinal archbishops of Westminster … achievement he referred to with characteristic wit as his "Red Hat Trick" — though he himself did not get into the college of cardinals.

Moving to Stepney in 1964 as a youthful parish priest, he worked with a team of five priests evangelising the homes and families of London's docklands. But these pastoral duties were interspersed with trips to Rome and residual duties at Archbishop's House. In Stepney he got to know a young Church of England priest called David Sheppard, then at the Mayflower Family Centre, who later became Bishop of Liverpool.



Derek Worlock gave encouragement to thousands PHOTO: DENIS THORPE

It was the experience of the Second Vatican Council that set the tone of Derek Worlock's ministry, and his style of leadership followed the council's vision of a church open to the active participation of laity under the firm authority of the successor of Peter. Some of the council documents he helped prepare showed a … cial realities and a recognition of gifts and contributions to be made by Christians of other churches. When he became a bishop at the last session of the council, he had all these renewed principles at his finger-tips — ready to be implemented in his Portsmouth diocese, where he succeeded John Henry King in 1965.

During a decade in Portsmouth 44 new churches were opened — signs of liturgical and pastoral renewal throughout the diocese. He had a growing and keen sense of the injustice of poor housing and unemployment, problems of a moral not just political nature, whose alleviation was a legitimate part of the gospel.

Leaving Portsmouth in 1975 was, he said, "what I imagine a divorce must feel like". The painful transition to the wider responsibilities of Liverpool was not his choice, but his sincere devotion to people and the Gospel endeared him … Paul VI to take on board the social needs of an area with the largest proportion of Catholics and among the weightiest problems of poverty and deprivation in the country.

Vestiges of sectarianism in Liverpool were a challenge to an archbishop bent on being a reconciler. It was an immense boon that his very first well-wisher at his new home in Liverpool was Bishop Sheppard, who arrived on the doorstep with a bottle of wine and a promise of collaboration. The partnership that helped work the "Mersey Miracle" began then. It was, said Cardinal Hume, borrowing a Mersey quip, a fish and chips partnership: always together and often in the papers.

Later, Archbishop Derek and Bishop David founded the Michaelmas Group, a regular gathering of top local businessmen and heads of industry, to see how partnership could achieve lasting benefits for Merseyside. His firm leadership and his role as honest broker were invaluable in the aftermath of the Toxteth street riots in 1981 and 1985 when he was asked to take the chair at reconciliation meetings between the police and the community.

The man behind all of this was paradoxically rather shy and reserved, though with a limitless capacity for work. He had a knack for giving the right advice, and judging the optimum moment to act or the *bon mot* to speak. If his perfectionism made him less approachable than some could wish, he was a good listener and a sympathetic pastor.

He did play a crucial part in setting up structures — such as the development of the new "ecumenical instruments" which established Churches Together in England and the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland. Yet he knew, and often repeated, that the church was *people* not structures, committees or buildings. He never lost sight of this truth.

Throughout his life Derek Worlock was affected by indifferent health. In 1980 he was diagnosed as a coeliac, unable to tolerate flour in his food. He presented a strong case to Rome for coeliac sufferers to be allowed to receive special hosts at communion — which was reluctantly granted.

and pain.

He never liked the idea of retirement, for he had made the Gospel his life's work, and resignation as archbishop would only have meant a shift in focus, a new form of priestly endeavour.

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GUARDIAN WEEKLY
February 18 1996

Even a symphony has to end

Simon Rattle is quitting as music director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, mourns **Adrian Mourby**

SO FAREWELL then, Sir Simon Rattle, Mr CBSO, Mr 150 per cent, Mr Symphony Hall, Mr Everything That Made Birmingham the Nation's New Capital of Classical Music.

I don't like to think how the city is taking the news of Rattle scaling down his role. This is like Scarborough without Alan Ayckbourn, or Ernie Wise without Eric. Rattle has done more than put the CBSO on the map and champion the Symphony Hall; he has come to personify musical excellence in Birmingham. The spotlight that has shone so happily on the CBSO for the last 15 years was focused on him. Now he is moving on, there must be many fears that it will follow him.

One violinist admitted: "You sit on the edge of your seat because he is so exacting." Another likened him to an alien life-form: "He's not the same as the rest of us." Stories abounded about Rattle the infant prodigy propped up in bed with an orchestral score just for the fun of it. Then came the concerts which set a new standard in the old town hall and the stories [illegible] energy to his players.

Under Rattle came more and more recording contracts. But



Rattle: tired of the job's sheer intensity PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN ROBERTSON

Simon Rattle did more than conduct. Stunts like the performance of Bolero with lasers attracted new audiences. He earned the respect of local councillors for his energetic support of the proposed Symphony Hall and he managed to get sums of money from the city council itself that left other provincial orchestras green with envy.

As the CBSO grew in prestige so Rattle began to import London players to raise the standard sufficiently for Birmingham's orchestra to rival, even to [illegible] And in recognition of all this work, more than a dozen prestigious awards came his way. When, amid much publicity, Birmingham celebrated its centenary two years ago, you might have been forgiven for thinking that the city's most famous son was a boy from Liverpool.

Simon Rattle had an individual style that worked. He was renowned for talking to the orchestra before and after performances. He insisted they called him "Simon" (even today many conductors prefer Mr or Maestro). He was said to know most of their names and even many of their problems. He once, famously, referred to the [illegible] nipples".

But now Sir Simon is not renewing his contract as musical director. The job is too much, he explains: "There are only so many years that any one person can keep up the sheer intensity necessary."

What does this mean? The job of a musical director is a very demanding one. It combines all the pressures of conducting with the minutiae of administration. Sir John Barbirolli was permanent conductor of the Halle for 15 years from 1943-58, exactly the same length of time that Rattle has been at Birmingham. But these days, there is far more pressure to come up with novel interpretations of great works. The preparation for a concert, and particularly for a recording, can be exacting and exhausting for any conductor.

Furthermore if that conductor is tied to a prestigious label like EMI, as Simon Rattle is, the pressure is also on to fly around the world and record with all the other orchestras contracted to that label.

When Barbirolli travelled, he might have been contactable on a long distance telephone call eventually. But a modern day musical director will find that faxes are pursuing him all around the globe. Even a request for a principal player to be absent from a particular concert had to be faxed to Rattle in New York or telexed to Berlin.

Conductors are like Premiership managers in football. They tend to come in, get the place running as they want it and move on. But Simon Rattle is the Brian Clough of the British music world. In recent years no conductor in Britain has [illegible] orchestra for anywhere near as long. So, although many people in Birmingham today are asking why he's going, many in the music world are asking why he stayed so long.

A dance to death

DANCE
Judith Mackrell

AIDS has a particular resonance for dance — not only because the disease has cut such a grim swath through the profession but also because the world tends, ironically, to see a kind of immortality in the beauty of dancers' bodies. Yet Aids is not an easy subject for choreographers, for dance cannot document or analyse. It is poorly equipped to deal with the daily grind of illness or the enormity of individual loss.

For Matthew Hart, aged 23, however, Aids is the inescapable issue for his generation, and his new ballet, Dances with Death, premiered by the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden last week, plunges bravely into it. His basic idea may sound trite, but it actually works well. The white-clad *corps de ballet* represent a group of healthy cells, and Hart moves them through elegant patterns which image the body as a formal, utopian community. As the ballet progresses a group of red dancers (the virus) invade these patterns, moving with a malign, obscene energy.

The four principal figures are a trio infected with the virus, and Death herself. It is here Hart tries, and fails, to shift the ballet to a more human level. The simplified rhetoric of [illegible] his victims is largely meaningless because they're never established as people we care for (though Belinda Hatley dances with a fine grieving dignity). And the choreography for Darcey Bussell as Death teeters on travesty as she stabs her *pointes* and swivels her hips like a dominatrix in a ballet brothel.

Hart also isn't helped by his music. Though Britten's Violin Concerto creates an edgy space for the dance to move in, its tensions are too internal, too formal to support the cathartic emotions he's striving for.

The Invitation, choreographed by Kenneth MacMillan in 1960, is also a young man's ballet, showing the seduction of a pair of adolescents by a desperate adult couple. It's 19 years since this was last performed and though parts now seem stiffly caricatured others are freshly shocking. The schoolroom naivety of the adolescents' world is comic book stuff, and the older couple are initially unconvincing in their mad-eyed marital discord.

But as the ballet shuffles sexuality and innocence, a more complicated reality emerges. The dead flatness with which the man partners his neurotic wife defines some truth about their marriage while the *pas de deux* between him and the Girl shows how her innocent steps become, for him, provocations. The final rape is genuinely gruesome.

By contrast, Ashley Page's ... **Now Languorous, Now Wild** ... flaunts its debonair charm, setting the reliable sizzle of Mukhamedov and Viviana Durante to the sinuous flamboyance of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies. Yet Page doesn't resort to predictable star stunts. Although he gives Mukhamedov his head in dashing swaths of jumps, and exploits Durante's bright speed and feline delicacy, his movement presents itself from constantly new angles and essays startling modulations, flashing danger and compli-

Rocks around the clock

CINEMA
Derek Malcolm

"*WHY ARE* you buying 10 pairs of sneakers? You only got one pair of feet," says Delroy Lindo's storekeeper to a kid in Spike Lee's Clockers. He's a protective, fatherly kind of guy. But he's also the local drug baron and villain of the piece.

This scene, and others, are reminiscent of A Bronx Tale, Robert De Niro's debut as director, in which Chazz Palminteri's local mobster takes the bus driver's son under his protective if ultimately menacing wing. One of the most truthful facets of Clockers is its sense of how the death-dealers, who will probably recruit the boy with the sneakers before he is much older, have a proprietary interest in patronising their own community.

Taken largely by Richard Price himself from his extraordinary book about ghetto life, Clockers was produced by Martin Scorsese, who was to have directed it. It is Lee's first essay in interpreting someone else's work, and it tries hard to break new ground, both in his own work and that of the rapidly degenerating gangsta-hip-hop genre.

It doesn't fully succeed. There's more than a little sense of *déjà vu* as Harvey Keitel's weary but still idealistic detective works his way into yet another murder case, finds the probable killer, a young man called Strike (Mekhi Phifer), only to discover that the suspect's hitherto blameless brother (Isaiah Washington) has confessed.

This is outwardly the stuff of many an American police thriller. But Lee, in concentrating on Strike and his world, rather than the detective's, manages to break out of that particular mould. What he fails to do is give the 'hood, with its often glamorised culture of violence, the kind of fresh look that's needed.

Clockers is slang for dealers who work all hours. Strike is only an opportunist out to secure his survival in what is very like a jungle. If he deals, he makes money. If he ices the drug baron's enemy, he rises a long way up the pecking order. To him, the options are that lousy. Keitel's detective knows this, but murder is murder.

Phifer's Strike is an outstanding portrait, raw but charismatic, and Washington, as the decent family man trying to hold down two jobs, is equally fine. So too is Delroy Lindo as the local Mr Big, vicious only when crossed. Meanwhile Keitel, as the professional cynic who still believes in something, gives us the reverse side of The Bad Lieutenant with his usual skill.

What Clockers intends to do is to tell it as it is, and show anger and passion in so doing. Price's purposes were perhaps somewhat different. He was a brilliant outsider looking in. Lee tries to be an insider looking out. He almost succeeds, but not quite. In the end, Clockers' mixture of thriller and cultural comment doesn't entirely mesh.

It's a fine film, but not the breakthrough Lee intended.

As the recent Four Rooms confirmed, short stories by different directors melded into feature films seldom work. But **Rendez-vous in Paris**, which contains three, is the work of one film-maker, and a past master at this sort of thing at that.

Eric Rohmer's latest film, shot in 16mm on the wing in odd corners of Paris, rather like his Le Signe Du Lion way back in 1959, deals with a trio of lovers talking their way in and out of relationships. They are all under 30, and it is an extraordinary thing that the older this veteran of the New Wave becomes, the younger are the participants in his films.

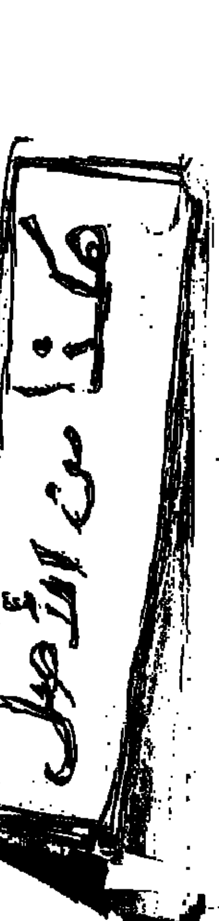
This could be a grave disadvantage, but it doesn't seem to be, even if the film is hardly his best. There's no strain whatsoever, and Rohmer gives the impression that he is eavesdropping on bourgeois realities, allowing his actors the freedom to be almost casual, and even letting passers-by look curiously into the camera lens; he also uses Paris as virtually another character. It's just the kind of film Europhobes don't like, but it's one which Europhiles, and fans of French cinema, in particular, will love. Absolutely nothing happens, but everything is precise and decided upon — it is all so fluent that it gives seamlessness a new meaning.

In the first story, The Seven O'Clock Rendez-vous, Clare Bellar's Esther suspects her boyfriend of two-timing her, and when her stolen wallet is returned by the girl with whom he is dallying, she has an opportunity to exact the perfect revenge. In the second, Paris Benches, Aurore Rauscher wants to leave her fiancé, and takes up with a young professor, but after agreeing to spend a day or two with him at a hotel, she then sees her fiancé there with another woman. And in the third story, Mother And Child, a painter (Michael Kraft) is visited by a Swedish girl. After looking her up and down, he takes her to the Picasso museum where he sees the woman of his dreams, who is unfortunately married.

On these slight tales, Rohmer constructs a series of philosophical and moral studies which underline both the complications of the would-be lovers and the way chance determines most things.

It is sad to report that the talented Robert Rodriguez's **Desperado** is more or less El Mariachi with a bigger budget, but not, unfortunately, a better script or storyline. Money clearly isn't everything, even though claims of the tiny production costs of El Mariachi were grossly exaggerated. Antonio Banderas replaces Carlos Gallardo as El Mariachi, whose guitar case gets him into severe trouble since crooks think it's full of weapons. Steve Buscemi, who is usually worth watching, is also involved, as is Quentin Tarantino.

But the characters are not what matters in this energetic farrago, since to say they are a little underdeveloped would be a charitable fib. The best one can say is that Banderas looks good and moves well, and that Rodriguez orchestrates his unlikely Mexican action movie with a sure sense of how to advertise his technical skill, but at 105 minutes [illegible]



GUARDIAN WEEKLY
February 18 1996

Radical artist with conservative tastes

Cézanne, the painter's painter, comes across as a daunting, difficult and deceptive artist, writes **Adrian Searle**

PAUL CEZANNE, the hatter's son from Aix-en-Provence, is getting the treatment: a major retrospective, a two-kilo catalogue, a credit-card ticket hotline and the second-hand sound-bites of Jeffrey Archer

The Cézanne retrospective at the Tate gallery in London until April 28, which has already been seen in Paris and travels on to Philadelphia, treats us to a magnificent overview of the artist's output from his early 20s to the day of his death.

He is a daunting, deceptive and contrary artist. The block-busting treatment of his work, accompanied by a compendious catalogue which subjects the artist, his contemporaries, his critics and collectors to the minutest scrutiny, leaves him as hard to define as his beloved Mont Sainte-Victoire in a heat-haze.

Cézanne remains both obdurate and distant. Even his self-portraits — which have suffered grandiloquent comparison to Rembrandt — don't let the mask slip, and reward us instead with a side-long, calculating stare. The nearest he comes to genuine human affection is in his 1870 portrait and drawings of the dwarf Achille Emperaire. Emperaire, with his great, dignified lion's head on a shrunken body, his clownish feet and long, elegant fingers, perches in a chair. It is almost as if Cézanne seeks to protect his friend through the monumentality of his solidly painted portrait, lending this vulnerable figure an aspect of magisterial inviolability.

But there is something odd about a man who paints his wife as though she were as inert as one of his apples: Madame Cézanne, with her stern mouth, her dead gaze, her fiercely-parted hair, is locked as much into the architectonic structure of her husband's paintings as she is in the stifling folds of her dresses. Cézanne was not what you might call a people person: "I should remain alone," he said. "People's cunning is such that I can't get away from it, it's theft, conceit, infatuation, rape, seizure of your production, and yet nature is very beautiful."

Nature, in his landscapes, is very beautiful indeed. He doesn't paint trees, rocks, scarps as topographical facts, but captures the way the light hits them, the space between them. The paint lies emphatically on the surface of the canvas. Though, like the Impressionists, he paints the suddenness of seeing, he is also aware that, as important [illegible] the painted scene, is the recognition that we are looking at a flat surface and lumps of paint.

If there is warmth in his portrayal of nature, it is there, too, in Cézanne's treatment of the quotidian, often homely world of houses basking in the sun, of apples, *compotiers* and rumpled tablecloths and the quiet intimacy of a group of card-playing, pipe-puffing rustics. Though there seem to be relationships between the men playing cards, they are in fact separated and remote, each one isolated within his own concentration.

It is in the works which come mostly from the artist's own head that the emotion reveals itself. In his early work, before he took to heading for the hills on painting expeditions with Camille Pissarro, he depicted rapes, abductions, and even murders. He painted fanciful mythological scenes, women defiled and abducted, assaults, ambiguous intimacies in languorous boudoirs and a stabbing. In these clogged, ferocious and almost expressionist canvases, Cézanne's creativity was focused as much on volatile content as on form.

What compel here are the *mise en scènes*: a frock-coated old fart scrutinising a voluptuous naked woman on a bed, a parody of Manet's Olympia; a naked hunk carrying a deathly pale woman into the bosky gloom; a man pinning a writhing woman to the ground while his companion goes in, wildly, with the knife.

Cézanne's technique in these paintings tended to be raw, hurried and rumbustious rather than methodical, as though the subject itself carried him along. And it is when his method breaks down that he becomes really interesting. However much Cézanne took consolation in nature, he was never a plodding naturalist. "Nature," he said, "I wanted to copy it, I didn't succeed."

Nature provided the motif, but he recognised it precisely as such, rather than as the painting's final subject. While he observed nature, and attempted to record it, record of the act of [illegible] hesitations, pauses, corrections, its tics and slips. Much has been made of the visible silences and breaks in his paintings, the places where the untouched, commercially primed canvas shows through the mat of stains and crusty dabs of paint. These ragged holes aerate the paintings and are seen to function as a sign of painting's artifice, yet at their most extreme, these untouched areas lead to questions about his intentions. Is the painting incomplete? Was it abandoned?

OF COURSE, completeness in painting is not the same thing as finish, but Cézanne was extremely critical of his own production, and never hesitated to chuck a painting aside if it wasn't working out. It may be that we are, at times, misreading his rejects. But caring about an artist's intentions is only one way of regarding the work itself, which, finally, must stand alone. A painting is a thing in the world, much more than a record of what the artist might or might not have meant.

His awkwardly magnificent paintings of bathers finally carried the cargo of his imagination and inspired so many subsequent artists, in part because of the peculiarity and waywardness of their imagery and formal construction. One bathing figure, with her arms raised above her head, provided the model both for one of the whores in Picasso's Demoiselles d'Avignon, and for a figure in Matisse's Joy Of Life.

The uses to which Cézanne has been put have been endless: he has been roped in as the progenitor of the school of Euston Road dirge, of Cubism, Abstract Expressionism, vapid post-painterly abstraction and even the fretful ironies of more modern movements. Even Minimalism can be laid at Cézanne's door. Henry Moore, who, like Picasso and Matisse, once owned one of the Bathers, remarked that "the type of woman he portrays is the kind I like [illegible] Not young girls but that wide, What a strength ... almost like the back of a gorilla".

But we can't blame Cézanne for Moore's sexual tastes or his stodgy sculptures, or for anything else which has happened in art during our benighted century.

Cézanne can neither be turned into a colourful "Year In Provence" annotator of domestic and rustic life, nor, quite, does he fit the bill as the exemplar of Modern Art, the ground-breaking radical, the prototypical avant-gardist. Scholarship tells us many things about him, but it does not really explain him nor the reason why we return to this difficult, taciturn, dangerous artist.

Cézanne's appeal cannot lie in his supposed humanity, whatever that may be, nor, I believe, is current interest in his work to do with any spurious rejuvenation of the medium of painting.

The answer may lie in our fascination with Cézanne's doubt, his anxiety about what painting could be — whether it could or should record our inner lives, or could exist as fact about our perceptions. Light flickers between, around and through things, and we turn out not to be solid at all, much less amalgams of the sphere, the cone and the cylinder.

Cézanne's curious, heavy bathers resist dissolution. They seem to exist on their own terms: not ours nor the artist's. Cézanne, for all his personal conservatism, was a radical in painting, who understood that the painter records the subjectivity of his or her own visions.

We know that we are not at the centre of things, but our place in the world is uncertain. Cézanne painted something very like that uncertainty.



Natural talent . . . Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen From Bibémus (1897, Baltimore Museum of Art): a scene which Cézanne painted again and again but the only portrait he seemed to endow with genuine affection was of his friend Achille Emperaire (detail below, 1869-70, Musée d'Orsay, Paris)



The heart of a romantic

THEATRE
Michael Billington

PLAYS about artists always present problems. After all, the very thing for which they are famous — painting, writing, composing — is hard to dramatise. But Pam Gems's Stanley at London's Cottesloe is a highly plausible, at times deeply moving portrait of Stanley Spencer: partly because of an inspired performance by Antony Sher and partly because Spencer's visionary genius is seen as inseparable from his sexual muddle.

What is fascinating is that Gems doesn't indulge in easy condemnation: she allows the facts of Spencer's often monstrous behaviour to speak for themselves. We see the artist and his devoted wife, Hilda, enjoying their Cookham paradise — saying their prayers before sex — until Spencer becomes romantically and socially infatuated with his snobbish neighbour, Patricia Preece, who lives with the painter Dorothy Hepworth. Spencer heartlessly junks Hilda, eventually marries Patricia and then tries to find a way of living with the two women at once.

Gems implies that sexual freedom is a condition of artistic activity. Spencer, in her view, is a kind of holy innocent whose vision of Christ returned to a Berkshire village is emotionally connected to his sexual voracity. In the process she demonises [illegible] in particular, his profound Englishness and attachment to nature.

At the heart of the play there is a deep romanticism. Artists are somehow exempt from moral sanctions, Augustus John pops in to embody the idea of the painter as life-loving bottom-pincher and, at the end, there is an improbably idyllic vision of pastoral England, full of bicycling vicars and jovial colonels.

But, although Gems never asks the awkward question as to why the artist should automatically be given moral licence, she conveys Spencer's strange mixture of selfishness and universal love.

Sher also transcends his natural talent for impersonation to capture, perhaps because he is a painter himself, the spiritual essence of Spencer. When he talks of his childhood home or apostrophises his dead wife he catches not only the heart but also the peculiar child-like nature of Spencer's genius: it is the most moving thing the actor has done.

Deborah Findlay beautifully conveys Hilda's saintly forbearance and there is exemplary support from both Anna Chancellor as the supine Patricia and from Selina Cadell as her Sapphic chum. And, aside from a final kitsch burst of candlelight illuminating Tim Hatley's practical, pew-laden set, John Caird's production is precisely in tune with the play's devout Anglophilia.

Bob's full house

Andy McSmith

Maxwell: The Final Verdict
by Tom Bower
HarperCollins 478pp £16.99

FOR FIVE weeks in the summer of 1990 I had the experience of working as Robert Maxwell's press spokesman. I did not volunteer. Upset that the newspapers were persecuting him again, the Chairman — as we were encouraged to call him — ordered the editor of the Daily Mirror to send him a journalist. I was chosen before I had the chance to say no.

In the weird atmosphere within the entourage of RM (as we were occasionally permitted to call him, affectionately, behind his back), we had to learn by rote the long, random list of friends and enemies. The media correspondent of the Financial Times and the City editor of the Sunday Telegraph were friends. The sports reporter from Central TV was OK. Anyone who worked for the Independent was an enemy. But of all the scribblers who were offensive in the eyes of the publisher, the worst of all, worse than the editor of Private Eye, was a freelance writer named Tom Bower.

Having had the impertinence to write Bob's biography without Bob's permission, when Bob was still alive and suing, Mr Bower has now revisited his old hunting ground to produce a 400-page account of the last year of Maxwell's life and its aftermath. One of the sub-plots recounts Maxwell's desperate efforts to stop his previous book from appearing. They included having Bower tailed by private detectives, who at one point seriously proposed to park a detector van at the bottom of his garden.

Written in the shadow of threatened writs, about a man who was compulsively secretive about his business affairs, the biography stands as one of the great journalistic achievements of our time. But, with some regret, I suggest that if you are pushed for time, forget it and get your hands on this one instead. With Maxwell dead, and his sons' first trial over, there is a mass of detail which either was not known before or could not be told. What Bower presents is that most unusual thing, a story which has everything: greed, intrigue, fraud, sex, spies, famous names and a mysterious and violent death. All it lacks is a fitting ending, and a decent title. The trial makes for a rather plodding and anti-climactic last chapter, but we cannot blame the writer for that, and I think he presumes too much to call it the "final verdict".

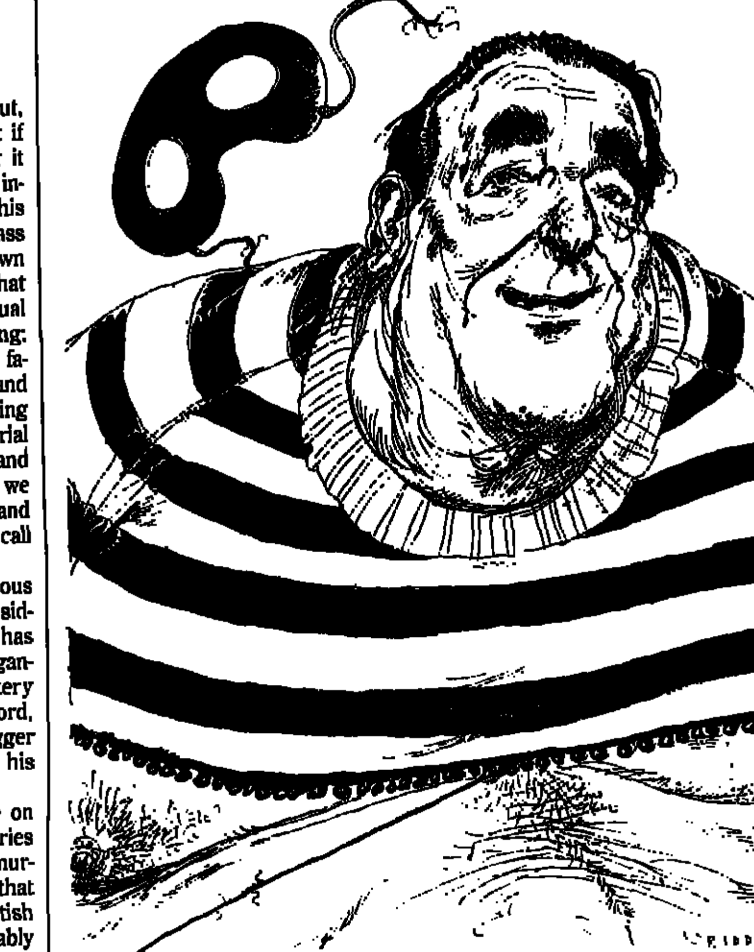
It is, though, a profoundly serious and unsensational narrative, considering the nature of the story he has to tell. Although Maxwell's gargantuan appetites for money, flattery and women are there for the record, all are merely elements in a bigger story, instances which illustrate his insane irresponsibility.

Bower does not waste space on unprovable and improbable theories about whether Maxwell was murdered. He simply relates that Maxwell was involved with British intelligence, the KGB and probably Mossad, and had problems with the Mob in New York, following his unbelievably self-indulgent entry into the city's newspaper industry. But the known facts are sensational enough: they do not need to be embellished with wild supposition.

The cast is gigantic. By my rough count, there are around 400 names listed in the index, most of them being people who dealt with Maxwell either as a businessman or a self-appointed world statesman. Each one's role is meticulously [...], a very large number who knew that something was rotten at the heart of the Maxwell empire, who for a variety of reasons did nothing about it.

There was also a merry-go-round in which, after which the administrator of the pension funds had complained that it owned too many shares in Maxwell's publishing conglomerate, MCC, a block worth about £55 million was sold to Goldman Sachs, who sold them on to the mysterious Liechtenstein-based trusts owned by Maxwell. The money which Goldman Sachs paid out was diverted into a Maxwell-controlled investment company which pay Goldman Sachs, so that the only effect of all this activity was that shares which belonged to the pensioners had ended up in Maxwell's hands, to become security for yet another bank loan. Employees at Goldman Sachs seem to have known that the money was going around in a circle, but seem not to have asked why.

The Maxwell story occasionally throws up heroes, or near-heroes, who realised that something was wrong and refused to be part of it — for example the four directors of MCC who rebelled in 1991 and prevented their chairman plundering the company further. There were others, but none who [...] their salaries and other comforts to blow the whistle. And all the while off stage were the thousands of poor, mugged pensioners, occasionally mentioned but never heard. They were simply not interesting to those caught up in the action. And that is by far the worst part of this story. — *The Observer*



Paperbacks

Nicholas Lezard

Superforce, by Paul Davies (Penguin, £7.99)

THE FIRST edition of this book, which tries to explain to the laity the concepts involved in finding a Grand Unified Theory of nature, came out in 1984: the goal is considerably nearer now. Do not be put off by odd stretches of explication about the spin rates of leptons and bosons: they're important, and Davies writes with exhilarating enthusiasm, almost poetic intensity, about his subject: the creation of the universe from nothing except geometry.

99 Poems in Translation, ed Harold Pinter, Anthony Astbury and Geoffrey Godbert (Faber, £7.99)

NO INTRODUCTION, no notes, no parallel texts of the originals: you have to infer this anthology's rationale yourself. But every poem — the field is all recorded literature — is a gem. "Even modest Penelope, when Ulysses snored,/Kept her hand on the sceptre of her lord." (From James Michie's version of Martial.)

The Time Out Guide to Budapest (Penguin, £9.99)

I PICK this out of a new series of Time Out guides on the grounds that I know very well that Budapest is a hard, if rewarding, nut to crack. This guide does it splendidly, and even tells you how to get rid of gypsy violinists from your restaurant table. My only complaint is that it is printed on super-heavy paper which will be cursed by the burden-conscious traveller.

The Book of Sodom, by Paul Hallam (Verso, £10.95)

AN ECLECTIC anthology, entries chosen simply on the grounds that the authors have invoked the name of the most notorious city of the plain. As such, it's fascinating: contemporary accounts of trials for public indecency, a passage from Proust, Dante's meeting with Arnaut in Purgatory, etc; and Hallam's long autobiographical essay meanders round London, examining its claims as a contemporary Sodom. Great stuff, and you certainly don't have to be gay to enjoy it.

A Natural History of the Senses, by Diane Ackerman (Phoenix, £7.99)

A DISCURSIVE ramble through the senses, written by a master of sinuous prose; all the more appropriate that she should flirt with archness, considering the elusive nature of fragrances, tastes and palpitations, but the book is full of hard facts too. I know now why orange juice tastes bitter after brushing your teeth. And so, if you read this book, will you.

Something rotten in the state of Britain

Marcel Berlins

In the Name of the Law: The Collapse of Criminal Justice
by David Rose
Cape 356pp £17.99

EVERY YEAR hundreds of thousands of criminals are justifiably arrested, not beaten up or framed by the police, correctly convicted and appropriately sentenced. It is worth making that point now, because David Rose's book seeks out the failings of the system, and it is easy to be seduced by his apocalyptic vision of future hell in modern Britain.

His thesis — I simplify — is that there is something rotten in all the institutions that affect criminal justice: police, the prosecution service, courts, judges, lawyers, government ministers, even Parliament. He does not claim that there are malevolent conspirators undermining the system for their own ends. On the contrary, he allows that much of the chaos and injustice has been created by individuals or theories that are well-intentioned but find the forces of reality against them. That is scant comfort. Victims of crime as well as of the criminal justice system do not care whether their misery is caused by a failure of ideology, cutbacks or an individual's spite.

Does he make out his case for a system close to collapse? Not quite. True, there is a chance that some innocent people will be sent to jail for crimes they did not commit — though fewer are at risk than 20 years ago, when the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four, Judith Ward and Stefan Kiszko were sent down (though, almost certainly, the wrong men are still in prison for the killing of Carl Bridgewater). But there is probably a bigger chance of criminals not being caught; or, if caught, getting off through the incompetence or bad luck of the police and/or the Criminal Prosecution Service.

The old adage used to proclaim that it was far better for 100 guilty men to be free than for one innocent man to be convicted. It was an indicator of society's apparent commitment to the individual's right to a fair investigation and a fair trial. What would be the acceptable ratio today? The majority would probably argue that it was perfectly all right to sacrifice the occasional innocent man if the *quid pro quo* was a safer neighbourhood. So give the police more powers to stop and search, cut down on suspects' rights under interrogation, deny defendants proper legal representation, increase judges' sentencing powers. It's tough on the innocent, but so what? We're bagging a lot more villains.

At one level this is a straight fight between the "crime control" lobby and the civil libertarians; or, as it is sometimes put, "coercion" versus "consent". The first, unchecked, leads to repression and the suppression of democratic rights. The second, if allowed too much scope, creates a society in which the citizen feels insecure in the face of rising disorder. Britain is living through a phase when the crime control adherents have the ideological advantage. But, crucially, crime control policies are not working. The public has clamoured for Mussolini but he has abjectly failed to make the trains run on time.

Rose's analysis covers the ground persuasively. He is particularly strong on the role of the police. Uncertain of its aims, starved of adequate finance and subject to constant shifts of policy, today's force cannot fulfil society's expectations.

He is interesting too (and honest) in elucidating the dilemma of the left-liberal. By nature a libertarian, against greater police powers, in favour of suspects' rights, the left-liberal suddenly changes sides when race enters the picture in the form of racial violence. Then he demands greater powers for the police, a special criminal law, and never mind the rights of the white racist suspect. In The Name Of The Law has many such insights.

Having demonstrated the shortcomings of the criminal justice machinery, Rose is then obliged to offer remedies. His difficulty (and that of the current government and its probable Labour successor) is that there are no solutions, easy or otherwise. Fiddling with the trial process would help a little; so would a reformed sentencing structure; so would tilting the balance of police powers this way or that, or finding a different way to prosecute. There are scores of helpful adjustments that could be made. But their combined effect would be minimal in the context of the problems faced.

Crime can be fought vigorously by introducing draconian laws and pouring huge sums of money into policing; it can also be fought by way of national economic improvement and a radical shift in social values. The first option is politically and morally unacceptable; the others will take a generation to show any results. Rose does not admit to such pessimism; but he has written a thought-provoking and passionate book. That it is ultimately deeply depressing is not his fault.

How Kew's seeds were sown

Eric Korn

Kew: The History of the Royal Botanic Gardens
by Ray Desmond
Harvill 466pp £25

IT WAS two generations of royal discord that produced Kew. George I took against his son, newly arrived from Hanover, and his daughter-in-law, Caroline, and sent them out of London, to the charming villas and grottoes of Twickenham — to garden, if that was what they wanted to do.

Their child, Frederick Augustus, was left in Germany with tutors until he was 21. He, in his turn, arrived in England to discover that his father (now George II) despised him and his mother hated him. So he married docile Augusta and they went off to Richmond — to a house adjacent to his parents' former place of exile.

Frederick built, beautified, cultivated, died. The various parks and gardens and palace grounds eventually fused to become Kew Gardens. Family affections were displaced on to plant families. Lord Bute, chief supporter to the bereaved Princess of Wales — gossip linked them in more than botany — gathered exotics from Georgia, China, the Cape.

Meanwhile, Frederick's brother became George III, losing America in a fit of sanity and starting to build Kew's castellated palace, "an image of distempered reason". Never roofed, it was demolished along with the host of ethnic follies that came and went with tides of fashion and landscape theory: Merlin's Cave, the temples Pan, Solitude, Eolus, Peace and Military Victory, the hermitage (with resident hermit) and the mosque. But, mad or sane, George III supported Joseph Banks, and let him turn the royal gardens into a scientific institute.

Banks, the great biological and cartographic entrepreneur and panjandrum, his own exploring days (with Captain Cook) done, was everywhere, gathering seeds and dried plants, building a library with his duo of Swedish librarians, Solander and Dryander, publishing and being published, granting or refusing cuttings to supplicants, dispatching plant-hunters (Scottish bachelors preferred) in all directions, and meddling with the ecology of the tropics. Captain Bligh was sent to Tahiti to pick up a few breadfruit for Jamaica — which he did, eventually. Later, rubber plants were smuggled out of Brazil, bananas and palms and pineapples sent hither and yon until the Earth wore a cummerbund of ugly plantations round its tropical middle.

George IV prettified Kew. William IV neglected it. A duke of Cumberland wanted it as a game preserve. It was not until the 1830s, when the Crown lost interest in it as a residence, that the various portions were fought over between the botanisers and those (especially in the Treasury) who thought that pleasure gardens would be less expensive. The job of running it as a scientific institution went to the admirable William Hooker. He spent 20 years there; his son, following him in the post, another 20.

Public access to Kew was gradually and reluctantly liberalised. At one time, male visitors had to wear a tall hat and a black or white neckerchief. In 1879, the current Hooker feared that the woods would be infested by "a swarm of filthy children and women of the lowest class" using the arboretum for immoral purposes. In 1919, the Daily Express cried "Mad Women invade Kew Gardens", but these were suffragettes, not bacchantes maddened by all that fertility. It took a demure riot or two to abolish the mornings reserved for "artists and students". Only recently has price been used to keep the public out. In 1980, the first of nine separate increases raised admission (unforgivably) 400-fold.

This is a work of scholarly record, using new-found archival material; sometimes Ray Desmond (once librarian at Kew) stands too close to his subject. He writes delicately, but is too deferential.

Ghost writing

Natasha Walter

The Hundred Secret Senses
by Amy Tan
Flamingo 321pp £15.99

AT HER best, Amy Tan both comforts and surprises us. Like Alice Walker and Jayne Anne Phillips and Jane Smiley and all those other ambitious American women novelists, Tan ties a knot in two strands of writing. She gives us romance and questions it, she gives us home and makes it a lost home, she gives us the charms of China and the charms of America, and questions the values of each. This is a big, loose, popular novel with a twisted thread of irony running through it.

So when her Chinese-American heroine, Olivia Yee, finally sees China for the first time, she recognises it: "I feel as though we've stumbled on a fabled misty land, half memory, half illusion . . . I feel like I've seen this place before . . . I feel as if the membrane separating two halves of my life has finally been shed." But what foothold does she have there? When she tries out her carefully polite Mandarin on a passerby, he replies in American. "Asshole," he says succinctly. The lack of central heating, the subsistence lifestyle, the owls sold for food — everything alienates her as much as it charms her.

Olivia's only real link to China comes through her half-sister Kwan, who came to live with Olivia's family in San Francisco as a child. Kwan is one of the most maddening, ebullient characters you will ever meet. Her endlessly chanted version of Olivia's name, "Libby-ah, Libby-ah," weaves through the book, together with her oddly broken speech, "Libby-ah, ask Simon — name of stereo fix-it store, what is?" and her inexplicable love for Olivia.



Amy Tan is fascinated by the texture of language PHOTOGRAPH: JANE BOWN

Although Kwan is a kind of anti-heroine, with her silly adoring ways and her podgy body and broken English, her voice comes to dominate the book. She believes that she can see and speak to ghosts, and her long tales of a past life in 19th century China, which she begins to tell Olivia in their childhood, are woven through the novel. This intriguing sleight of hand, through which Tan makes Kwan both the most marginal and also the most authoritative character in the book, will be familiar to readers of The Joy Luck Club. There, all the Chinese women were both figures of fun, with their bad dress sense and superstitions and obsessive eating habits, and repositories of almost mythic romance and wisdom.

This double vision is achieved partly through language. Although most of the book is told from Olivia's point of view, in a bland, easy American, with Kwan's speech rendered in broken English, Kwan's own tales are given in a different style — we are given to believe it is a translation from the Mandarin.

Indeed, Amy Tan is fascinated by the thickness, the textures of language. Much of the women's relationship is built through language. In their contemporary American lives, Olivia teaches Kwan English and helps her through its banal insults and jokes. When the neighbourhood kids tease them, "Olivia's sister is a retard," Kwan is quiet for a while, and then, "Libby-ah, what this word, lee-tahd?", and Olivia feels a pull at her heart. But in their past lives, Kwan — as Nunumu — teaches Olivia — as Miss Banner, an American missionary — to talk Chinese, and tentatively the women make contact. "One day, Miss Banner touched her palm on the front of her body and asked me how to say this in Chinese. After I told her, she said to me in Chinese: 'Miss Moo, I wish to know many words for talking about my breasts!' And only then did I realise she wanted to talk about the feelings in her heart."

These sharp linguistic patterns weave through an easy, straightforward plot. Olivia is having terrible troubles with her husband, and wants a divorce. Kwan is set against it. She finally tells Olivia the kernel of the tales of their past lives. In the 19th century, Kwan believes, she kept Olivia and her true love apart. Now that they are all reincarnated Kwan must bring Olivia and Simon together. In a grandiose, fairy-tale denouement, all Kwan's prophecies come true. Delightful, or a cop-out?

The sugary optimism of this ending shortchanges the explorations and dissonances of the rest of the book. Olivia's journey is more interesting than her arrival, and Amy Tan's questions resonate more powerfully than her answers.

Designer revolution

Eve MacSweeney

Fashion and Perversity: A Life of Vivienne Westwood and the Sixties Laid Bare
by Fred Vermorel
Bloomsbury 245pp £16.99

THIS IS a curious and uncomfortable book. It is less about Vivienne Westwood than Malcolm McLaren, whom the author is clearly both more interested in and more familiar with. And it's less about either of them than about Fred Vermorel, for, as he pompously justifies himself in his introduction: "Biographies, after all, overlap, and shared circumstances and attitudes can say it all." Vermorel has the distinction of having been friends, as a teenage art student in Harrow, with McLaren, and of having participated in the Paris '68 riots (rather than just wishing he had, like McLaren, who arrived after the riots had finished). Both of these facts appear to have shaped his life. He has made a career of writing and lecturing on the popular culture that he lived through: the Sex Pistols; the phenomenon of rock fans; consumerism and mass media. Vermorel's writing is still entrenched in the rhetoric of his youth: he describes his activities, with apparent seriousness, in terms of "the revolution", and he is boyishly enamoured of such notions as transgression, subversion and deviancy.

Though Westwood granted Vermorel one meeting over dinner for this book, and gave him access backstage at one of her shows, the author cut his ties with Westwood and McLaren in the early eighties. For pragmatic reasons, if none other, he therefore focuses on their early years together as a means of tracing the roots of the cultural impact they were to make as King's Road shopkeepers and the masterminds of punk. In the first section, he uses his own reminiscences, together with interviews with those around Westwood, in the facetious device of "an imaginary interview" with the designer. This immediately gives an air of speciousness to his enterprise, even if he assures us in his introduction that he "didn't make any of it up, though you might be tempted to think so".

Vivienne's life story, as she "tells it" here, attributes the source of the eccentric combination of convention and unruliness in her designs to the flavour of her lower middle-class upbringing in Tintwhistle, near Manchester, in the forties and fifties. There was much marching of bands in the village, and people dressed in "the kind of clothes the Queen might wear". "I took that essential frumpiness," Westwood "says" in this account, "and reworked it to subvert it with a touch of glamour." Westwood's family moved to London in her late teens, and she married at 20, became a schoolteacher and had a son. She met McLaren through her brother, and became fascinated by him.

Despite the arrogance and opportunism of his approach, Vermorel's account of Westwood and McLaren's collaboration throws interesting light on both their symbiosis and their rivalry, particularly as Westwood slowly came out of McLaren's shadow and began to outstrip him with the success of her designs.

AS THEY repeatedly tore down and reinvented themes for their King's Road shop (Sex, Seditionaries, etc), which they used as a "playpen for [their] ideas", the Vivienne of this account claims: "I needed him to feed me with ideas and he still needed me to turn his ideas into clothes." Later they would battle for the authorship of punk, which is deemed by Vermorel to have been more a fashion statement than a musical or political manifesto.

A devastating portrait of McLaren emerges in these pages as he constantly pits the grandiosity of his ideas against a shortfall of obvious talent. Vermorel proudly posits the diagnosis that McLaren suffers from Tourette's syndrome, a neurological disorder which manifests itself in odd behavioural tics and foul-mouthed and antisocial behaviour. He clearly enjoys the idea that Westwood and McLaren in turn influenced the behaviour of a generation by customising the symptoms of Tourette syndrome into an attitude and a style.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
February 18 1996

A ruddy sitting duck

Paul Evans

IT'S AN alien invader, it's got a bad reputation, a supercharged libido, it's got conservationists hot and bothered and it's got a daft name. With a CV like that, the ruddy duck is on a hiding to nothing. Thanks to an international conspiracy of scientists, governments and some conservation agencies, the ruddy duck was destined to be severely "managed". That is a clinical way of saying "blasted out of the water". But just last week, there were conflicting reports that the British Environment Secretary, John Gummer, would grant a reprieve for the duck, and then that he wouldn't. There is some murky politics behind the ruddy duck issue and no one wants to come clean for fear of alienating conservation from public opinion.

The North American ruddy duck, *Oxyura jamaicensis*, is a small, reddish-brown member of the "stiff-tails", common on American and Canadian freshwater marshes during the breeding season, moving to coastal salt water habitats in the winter. It was introduced to Britain almost 50 years ago by the eminent naturalist Sir Peter Scott, who bred it at his wildfowl reserve at Slimbridge. For more than 40 years, the ruddy ducks expanded their range in lakes and reservoirs throughout Britain and were welcomed as an addition to the wildfowl fauna, gaining legal protection.

In parallel, a close relation of the ruddy duck, the white-headed duck, *Oxyura leucocephala*, was in a dangerous decline in Spain. The population of this symbol of Andalucia, much prized for its flesh, had crashed leaving a genetically weak enclave of only 22. Eager to gain some credibility, the Spanish authorities mounted a huge rescue effort to save their white-headed ducks and build up the population. Then, in 1991, a few hybrids were discovered and allegations were levelled at visiting randy ruddy ducks from Britain whose foreign genes were putting the future of the white-headed duck at risk.



ILLUSTRATION: BARRY LARKING

The Spanish duck is itself genetically isolated from the rest of the *O. leucocephala* species found in southern Russia, Turkey and Azerbaijan. The fear grew that the polluting genes of the ruddies would run amok through Spain, leading to the extinction of the white-headed duck, and would eventually contaminate the species heartland.

PRESSURE from Spain and the European Union resulted in 10 countries agreeing to a programme of "control" for the ruddy duck in Europe. Since most ruddies were to be found in Britain, a working group of conservationists was set up here to plan the "final solution". There is confusion about whether or not the cull will take place, what sites will be chosen, and how much it will all cost (rumours are tens of thousands of pounds).

That taxonomy can lead to such hysteria is worrying and raises a multitude of suspicions about racial purity and ecological cleansing. While scientists pore over genetic duckprints, matching up DNA smudges, what really is the danger of this interbreeding? How sacrosanct is a species that seems so eager to hybridise?

Many ornithologists are suspicious of the circumstantial evidence pinned on the British ruddy ducks. They are not the only ones to escape from collections. It would be interesting to know what Spanish ecologists and naturalists make of this, and also what their colleagues in southern Russia and Turkey think.

The ruddy duck has allies. There are people willing to stand up for the bird. And, rumour has it, during some "trials" the ruddies have proved almost impossible to shoot. All in all, these ducks are going to be ruddy difficult to get rid of, bless 'em.

Bridge Zia Mahmood

THESE are my answers to the bidding problems in the Christmas competition. Thanks to all of you who entered — I'll let you know next week the solution to the play problem and the names of the winners!

Problem 1 Your hand is:

♠3 ♥AK654 ♦QJ8743 ♣5

South	West	North	East
?			

Rank in order of preference the calls: 1♥, 1♦, Pass.

I don't like 1♦ much, since it risks never being able to show the hearts safely. If partner responds 1♠, for example, I'm going to have to rebid 2♦ because the hand is not strong enough for a reverse into 2♥, and I will never convince partner that I have five hearts after that start to the auction. If the opponents bid spades, I'd rather not feel obliged to show the hearts and be put back to diamonds at a higher level. I'd prefer pass to 1♦ — perhaps the opponents will bid the black suits, and I can then show my limited two-suiter via a cue bid or a takeout double. But I know I could never bring myself to pass this hand at the table — I would open 1♥ every time. Pass second choice, 1♦ third.

Problem 2 Your hand is:

♠J986 ♥KQ4 ♦653 ♣Q97

South	West	North	East
		1♥	Pass
?			

Rank in order of preference the calls: 2♥, 1NT, 1♠.

This is a close decision — with a hand that may only make one bid in the auction, should I show the weak four-card spade suit via 1♠, or the heart support despite lack of ruffing values via 2♥, or the balanced nature of the hand via 1NT? The hand has too much in hearts and not enough in the minors for me to suggest no trumps — let partner bid them first. I believe in supporting partner when I can, so 2♥ is attractive. But it is best to look towards a 4-4 spade fit. I'd bid 1♠, with 2♥ a close second choice and 1NT a distant third.

Problem 3 Your hand is:

♠AK104 ♥A3 ♦J9 ♣K10965

South	West	North	East
			1♦
?			

Rank in order of preference the calls: 2♣, 1♠, Double.

Very difficult! Horrible things seem to happen to me when I make a takeout double without adequate support for one of the major suits. Partner, rightly, expects me to have a fit for his major, and might jump to three or even four hearts if I doubled. I don't object to 2♣, but I'd prefer to have a longer or stronger suit. I'd expect my partner to look for 3NT if he held something like ♣A4 and a diamond stopper facing a 2♣ overcall — and he'll be disappointed with this dummy if he does. 1♠ may work badly, but it could also work well if I find a 4-4 fit, and it leaves room for the auction to develop. I'd bid 1♠, with 2♣ second and double third.

Problem 4 Your hand is:

♠A4 ♥K7 ♦AKJ632 ♣A76

South	West	North	East
?			

Rank in order of preference the calls: 2NT, 2♦, 1♦.

This hand, with its array of controls and a good suit, has great potential for slam if we have a fit. That's why I wouldn't open 2NT, since it's not easy to reach slam in diamonds or perhaps clubs after that start. I'd have to open 1♦ with some partners, who favour the weak two bid when possible, but I'd be happy to open with an Acol 2♦ if I could. Since it's my competition, I'll open 2♦ for preference, with 1♦ second and 2NT third. ©

Quick crossword no. 301

Across

1 Competent (4)
3 Advantage or disadvantage (8)
9 Calm — ocean (7)
10 Proprietor (5)
11 Surpass (5)
12 Discerned (6)
14 Forger (13)
17 Dinner jacket (6)
19 Crude (5)
22 Woo — tribunal (5)
23 Colleague (7)
24 Increased (8)
25 Cowshed (4)

Down

1 Come closer to — an entrance (8)
2 Lawful (5)
4 Parisian landmark (3,2,8)
5 Sag (5)
6 Happy — inside (7)
7 Separate — portion (4)
8 Resting on water (6)
13 Pickle — store (8)
15 Extraordinary — odd (7)
16 Provide company — car (6)
18 Penetrate (5)
20 Irritate (5)
21 Pain (4)

Last week's solution

H	O	R	O	S	C	O	P	E		P		I
	R		G		A		A		L	I	S	T
G	A	L	L	A	N	T	R	Y		N		I
	L		E		D		I		M	E	A	N
B		F		R	I	V	A	L		A		E
U	N	U	S	E	D		H	A	M	P	E	R
C		R		N				Y		P		A
C	A	N	C	E	L		D	E	A	L	E	R
A		I		W	A	G	E	R		E		Y
N	O	T	E		U		F		R		W	
E		U		I	N	D	I	C	A	T	E	D
E	A	R	N		C		L		S		L	
R		E		T	H	R	E	S	H	O	L	D

Chess Leonard Barden

A CHESS opening's popularity can ebb and flow according to the assessment of a single critical line. A favourable analysis means that GMs will sidestep into calmer non-forcing variations, while the opening's increased fashion at top level percolates down to club and weekend matches. If the balance then shifts and the key variation looks dubious, there's a mass exodus as experts adjust their repertoire.

The Modern Benoni, once the most feared weapon of the legendary tactician Mikhail Tal, is a good example of the critical line syndrome. It begins **1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 c5 4 d5 exd5 5 cxd5 d6** when the solid white play is 6 Nf3 with e4, Be2 and Nd2 while the sharp approach is **6 e4 g6 7 f4 Bg7 8 Bb5+** and if Nfd7 9 Bd3. This was known in Tal's heyday, but when Kasparov scored a few impressive white victories around 1980, many Benoni players got scared.

Recent analysis has centred on 8 Bb5+ Nbd7 9 e5 dxe5 10 fxe5 Nh5, offering a piece for attack. If Black could get away with it, other pre-database Benoni moves and ideas from the fifties and sixties would become interesting. Sadly, this week's game may squash the revival.

Ivan Sokolov-Veselin Topalov, Wijk 1996

(first 10 moves as above) **11 e6 Qh4+ 12 g3 Nxg3 13 hxg3 Qxh1 14 Be3 Bxc3+ 15 bxc3 a6 16 exd7+ Bxd7 17 Bxd7+ Kxd7 18 Qb3!** Bosnia's No 1, Sokolov, and his Bulgarian No 1 rival are hot on theory, so this is clearly pre-game homework.

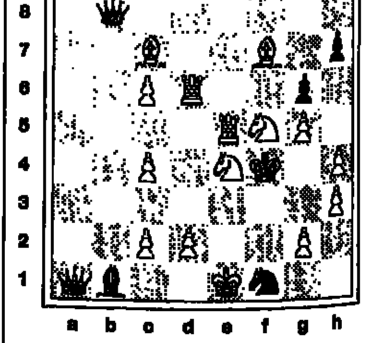
b5?! This attempt to keep Black's Q-side intact fails. Can Black try Rae8? One plausible line then is 19 Qxb7+ Kd8 20 0-0-0 Rxe3 21 Qb8+ Kd7 22 Qxh8 Qe4 when 23 Qxh7? loses to Rxc3+ 24 Kb2 Rc2+ 25 Ka1 Qe5+

19 0-0-0 Rhe8 20 Bxc5 Rac8 21 Bd4 Qg2 22 Qa3! Now Black's Q-side still collapses, and his counterplay against the WK is too slow.

Qxg3 23 Qxa6 Rxc3+ 24 Kb2 Rcc8 25 Qxb5+ Kd6 26 Ka1 Qa3 27 Bb2 Qc5 28 Qa6+ Kd7 29 Qa4+ Resigns. If Kd6 30 Ba3 or Kd8 Bf6+ wins.

Fide's new president, Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, has shocked top players by proposing an annual knockout world championship, settled by only two or four games in the final as against the current 20. He wants to stage the first title KO for a $5.25 million prize fund in his semi-autonomous republic of Kalmykia, a near-neighbour of Chechenia.

No 2408



White mates in two moves, against any defence (by H Prins, 1987). A tricky test this week, which previous solvers described as "a shoal of red herrings" and "genuinely difficult". At least three near-misses fail to hidden black defences, so allow yourself half an hour or more.

No 2407: 1 Bb6. If Ke2 2 Nd4, or R any 2 Qf1, or f4 2 Bxg4, or B any 2 Qxd3.



GUARDIAN WEEKLY
February 18 1996

Football Coca-Cola Cup semi-final first leg: Birmingham City 1 Leeds United 2

Leeds get a glimpse of Wembley

David Lacey

LEEDS UNITED survived the Birmingham experience uneasily on Sunday to move within sight of their first League Cup final for 28 years and their first final of any kind at Wembley for 23.

A 2-1 lead guarantees nothing for the return game but on the evidence of this match Leeds should have enough attacking nous to go through to meet Arsenal or Aston Villa on March 24.

Sunday was Birmingham City's day and for a time it promised to be Birmingham's story. Certainly Barry Fry's enthusiastic, hard-working First Division team provided the bulk of the drama.

But in the end Leeds provided the anti-climax, responding to the lead Birmingham had taken midway through the first half with two goals after the interval, the second of these going in off a home defender, Whyte.

For their visit to Elland Road, Birmingham will put their trust in the pace and persistence which, for a time on Sunday, had Leeds grateful simply to keep the ball beyond scoring range. The tie is not over yet.

Leeds looked impressive at times, nervous at others. The opening quarter-hour was a demonstration of McAllister's creative skills but, as soon as Birmingham began to sustain pressure, Howard Wilkinson's defence started to dissolve in a familiar fashion.

Nobody encapsulated the spirit of Birmingham better than Claridge, whose career has been spent trudging around football's lowlands. He was more determined than anybody not to let the chance of appearing in a major Wembley final pass. Socks down, shirt and shorts flapping, Claridge announced Birmingham's presence with a marvellous volley past the top far angle after 16 minutes. From that moment Birmingham always believed they could achieve a significant lead. Their midfield was tireless in pursuit of space and possession, the gangling Francis, 6ft 7in of arms and knees, became an increasingly awkward problem for Beesley and Wetherall, and always Claridge was harassing and hustling opponents into error.



United we stand . . . Leeds winger Danny Wallace (top) celebrates his part in Yeboah's goal at St Andrews PHOTOGRAPH: GAVIN BLYTH

St Andrews sensed celebrations were not far away. Sure enough, Birmingham took the lead after 26 minutes. A ball from Sheridan, on loan from Sheffield Wednesday, caught Beesley out of position on its way to Claridge, who nodded Francis through to score with a resounding shot from just beyond the penalty arc. At this point Leeds, for all McAllister's scolding, had lost their sense of tactical discipline. Yeboah, however, remained a consistent threat.

The Ghanaian's close control and tight turns were ever likely to conjure scoring opportunities. Eight minutes into the second half a mistake by Johnson allowed Wallace to send Yeboah through for the sort of chance he rarely misses and Griemink was beaten by a low shot into the far corner.

St Andrews looked blue but, after Fry had brought on Donowa and Otto to give his attack more natural width, Birmingham re-established the dominance they had enjoyed in the first half. One dash by Donowa from penalty area to penalty area was especially memorable.

By that time, however, Leeds had gone ahead. In the 72nd minute Yeboah met Kelly's cross from the right with a sharp downward header, whereupon the ball flew up, struck the head of the hapless Whyte and sailed on beyond Griemink's reach. With Bowen, another Birmingham substitute, dragging his shot wide in the 88th minute with only Lukic to beat, St Andrews could only reflect on what might have been.

Cricket World Cup

Laser dazzle fails to lift Cup gloom

Mike Selvey

THE 110,000 people who jammed into Eden Gardens in Calcutta on Sunday night saw a dazzle of laser light and ethnic dancing inaugurate the sixth World Cup. After doubts that it might go ahead at all, it was something to celebrate. But it goes ahead as a devalued competition after the organisers, Pilcom, failed to reach agreement with either Australia or West Indies over the scheduling of matches in Sri Lanka.

Australia and West Indies had both refused to play qualifying matches against Sri Lanka in Colombo in the wake of last month's bombing. But, despite assurances that security would be possibly the tightest yet seen at a sporting event and offers to fly teams in and out of the country on the day of the match, hours of back-room bartering and delicate negotiation by Pilcom, the International Cricket Council — led by its chairman Sir Clyde Walcott — and representatives of Australia and West Indies resulted in stalemate.

Neither qualifying match will take place, Australia and West Indies will have to make the quarter-finals on the strength of results in their remaining four matches (although with Kenya and Zimbabwe in the group that should not prove a problem) and Sri Lanka almost certainly have qualified already on account of the maximum four points — as opposed to the two that had been anticipated — that they will take from the walkovers.

It will place a question mark over the authenticity of the tournament. Sri Lanka are a major force now in one-day cricket and it is perfectly feasible that, in front of their home supporters, they would have won their matches. Almost certainly they would have qualified for the quarter-finals. Thereafter, though, with quarter-final pairings depending on relative positions in the two qualifying group tables — first in one of the two groups plays the fourth-placed team in the other — it can materially affect the progress of the tournament as it assumes knock-out mode. Whichever side lifts the trophy in Lahore on March 17 will do so with a hint of doubt hanging over their achievement.

In Calcutta over the weekend, Walcott, aware of the damage that could be done to the image of international cricket and to the relationships between the countries, sought a compromise, but with the ICC having no power to impose a solution, in the end had to admit failure and suggested that ICC should carry "more clout".

There is no doubt that the stance taken by Australia and West Indies, understandable as it may be, means a split in the cricket world and with both India and Pakistan touring England this summer, the week-

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Peers vote for viewers

THE Government suffered a humiliating defeat in the House of Lords last week when peers voted by 223 to 106 — a majority of 117 — to deny Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB exclusive rights to the eight "listed" sporting events.

The Lords defeat came hours after an announcement from the Office of Fair Trading that it was referring the Premiership's television broadcasting arrangements to the Restrictive Practices Court, in a move that could have wide implications for the broadcasting of all sport in Britain.

The reference will mean a thorough investigation of the exclusive contract by which BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster 40 per cent owned by Murdoch's News Corporation, airs matches of the 20 Premiership clubs.

But the future availability of television sport moved a step away from the majority of viewers in Britain when 10 major sporting bodies, meeting in London last week, demanded the freedom to negotiate contracts without being restricted to the terrestrial networks.

A PLAN which could see 10 English football clubs playing in Europe next season and 15 in 1997-98 was unveiled by the Continent's top clubs and Uefa in Geneva last week. Under the scheme, two English clubs would automatically compete in the European Cup and two in the Cup Winners' Cup. There would be two additional qualification places for England and one for Scotland in the Uefa Cup, which is being expanded to 119 clubs.

The changes are aimed at giving Europe's top clubs more money-making ties in an attempt to head off any thoughts of these clubs breaking away to set up their own lucrative competitions. The blueprint was attacked by the game's world governing body Fifa. Its president, João Havelange, said he was strongly against the European federation's intentions to expand its club competitions to give more places to teams from leading nations.

COLOMBIAN striker Faustino Asprilla became a Newcastle United player when the on-off £6.7 million deal was signed to end weeks of protracted negotiations between the Premiership leaders and the *Serie A* club, Parma. The four-year-old deal paid instant dividends when Asprilla came on as substitute in last Saturday's north-east derby against Middlesbrough and set up a goal for Watson. Another by Les Ferdinand gave the Magpies a 2-1 victory *(results and tables, page 32)*.

Middlesbrough boss Bryan Robson meanwhile made his second Brazilian acquisition when the club completed the signing of Branco on an 18-month contract, with the option … Branco joins team-mate Juninho at the club after buying out his contract with Brazil's Internacional.

While these two South American stars enter the English soccer scene, two other overseas players were shown the door when Illie Dumitrescu of Romania and Switzerland's Marc Hottiger were refused work permits by the Department of Employment. West Ham, who had agreed to pay Tottenham £1.5 million for the Romanian, and Everton, set to buy Hottiger from Newcastle for £800,000, are furious over the ruling and are planning an appeal.

Both players have fallen short of the DoE requirements for foreign players who must have played 75 per cent of their club's first-team fixtures to qualify for new permits.

Meanwhile it is claimed that British Asian footballers represent a large pool of untapped domestic talent but their progress into the professional game is hampered by racial stereotyping and the current vogue for overseas players. The claim is made in a report by the Midland Asian Sports Forum, following a survey of British Asian footballers and the professional game's attitude towards them.

MANCHESTER UNITED have signed the biggest kit sponsorship deal in British football history. The six-year contract with Umbro is said to be worth £65 million. The deal follows months of negotiations between the club and some of the world's leading sportswear manufacturers. It beats the previous record of £25 million over four …

JOCKEY Walter Swinburn, winner of three Epsom Derbys, was admitted to the intensive care unit of a Hong Kong hospital on Sunday after suffering a crashing fall at Sha Tin racecourse. Swinburn, aged 34, suffered serious injuries after his mount veered across the track and smashed through the inside running rail, catapulting him to the ground.

SCOTTISH snooker star Stephen Hendry added a sixth Benson & Hedges Masters trophy to his five world and four UK titles by beating the defending champion Ronnie O'Sullivan 10-5 in the final at Wembley Conference Centre on Sunday.

DONOVAN BAILEY of Canada broke the 50-metre world indoor record after clocking 5.56 seconds at the Reno Air Games in Nevada. His time beat the previous mark of 5.61sec, set by German Manifred Kokot in Berlin in 1973 and equalled by American James Sanford 15 years ago.

WHILE the recent Arctic conditions to hit Britain caused widespread disruption to train services, it failed to dampen British Rail humour. Spotting Howard Kendall, manager of First Division strugglers Sheffield United, at the local station with a cup of tea in his hand, one railway official asked another: "What's he doing here?"